

*‘Ehm...excuse me, but...have you
forgotten to remember?’ –*

Politeness Strategies in *Reminders*: A Study of the
Pragmatic Competence of Danish Advanced Learners of
English

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the pragmatic competence of Danish advanced L2 learners of English. More specifically, the thesis focuses on the learners' politeness strategies when performing the understudied speech act reminders.

With the purpose to look at learners' reminding strategies, the thesis survey was performed by means of a discourse completion task, a method which is commonly used in second language research. Aiming to find possible indications of language transfer, the learners were asked to answer to situations in L1 Danish in addition to L2 English. A group of native English speakers were moreover included in the survey, against whose answers the learners' would be compared and contrasted.

Results show that even advanced learners may have difficulties reminding in L2 English, and that they may rely on L1 pragmatic norms when communicating in a second language.

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Contents

Tables and Figures.....	XI
1 Introduction	1
2 Speech acts and politeness.....	4
2.1 Pragmatics.....	4
2.2 A sociolinguistic aspect.....	5
2.3 Speech acts.....	7
2.4 Reminders.....	12
2.5 Politeness.....	15
2.6 Politeness theory.....	16
3. Pragmatic competence in second language acquisition.....	25
3.1 A 'second language'.....	26
3.2 The role and impact of age in second language acquisition.....	27
3.3 Acquiring English in a Danish classroom setting.....	28
3.4 Second language acquisition of pragmatic competence.....	31
3.5 Transfer in second language acquisition.....	33
3.6 Transfer of pragmatic competence: presenting conflicting findings.....	35
4 Methodology.....	44
4.1 Choice of method: Advantages with the discourse completion task.....	44
4.2 Some weaknesses with the discourse completion task.....	45
4.3 The discourse completion task applied to the present thesis.....	48
4.4 DCT construction.....	49
4.4.1 Testing the method.....	55
4.4.2 Administering the DCT.....	57
4.5 Participants.....	60
4.5.1 Target participants.....	61
4.5.2 Second language findings.....	64
4.5.3 Determining the L2 norm.....	67
4.5.4 The American English participants.....	68
4.5.5 Classifying the study.....	69
4.6 Method for analysis of DCT answers.....	70

5. Presentation of survey results and discussion of the findings.....	73
5.1 Establishing the categories for the performance of reminders in English and Danish.....	73
5.2 Communicative strategies in performing reminders: some overall findings.....	80
5.3 The particular situations.....	89
5.4 Modification.....	122
5.4.1 Syntactic downgraders.....	123
5.4.2 Lexical/phrasal downgraders.....	125
5.4.3 External modification	127
5.4.4 Discussion and comparison with previous studies.....	128
5.4.5 Conclusion.....	132
5.5 Transfer.....	133
5.5.1 My findings: Indications of transfer.....	133
5.5.2 Comparing my findings to previous related studies.....	135
5.5.3 Conclusion.....	139
6. Conclusion.....	140
6.1 Study limitations.....	142
Appendix	144
References	162

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

<u>Table 1</u> Searle's <i>felicity conditions</i>	11
<u>Table 2</u> Differences between L1 and L2 acquisition	28
<u>Table 3</u> Trosborg's request strategies.....	39
<u>Table 4</u> Model for analysis of participants' reminding strategies.....	80
<u>Table 5</u> Percentagewise distribution of communicative strategies in all of the 12 DCT situations combined.....	81
<u>Table 6</u> Situation 3.....	90
<u>Table 7</u> Situation 1.....	92
<u>Table 8</u> Situation 4.....	95
<u>Table 9</u> Situation 10.....	98
<u>Table 10</u> Situation 8	101
<u>Table 11</u> Situation 6.....	103
<u>Table 12</u> Situation 9.....	106
<u>Table 13</u> Situation 11	109
<u>Table 14</u> Situation 12.....	111
<u>Table 15</u> Situation 7.....	114
<u>Table 16</u> Situation 5	116
<u>Table 17</u> Situation 2.....	118
<u>Table 18</u> Modification of the reminders in the study.....	123

Figures

<u>Figure 1</u> 'The pragmatic continuum: language-culture'.....	6
<u>Figure 2</u> Possible strategies for doing FTAs.....	18
<u>Figure 3</u> Gender distribution.....	61
<u>Figure 4</u> 'Behersker du andre fremmedsprog end engelsk ?'.....	65
<u>Figure 5</u> 'Har du lært andre fremmedsprog FØR engelsk?'.....	65
<u>Figure 6</u> 'Hvor ofte ser/hører du engelsk udenfor skolen?'.....	65
<u>Figure 7</u> 'Hvor ofte snakker/skriver du engelsk udenfor skolen?'.....	65
<u>Figure 8</u> 'Hvorfra får du hovedsagligt dine engelsk-input udenfor skolen?'.....	65
<u>Figure 9</u> Main <i>reminders</i> categories.....	71

1. Introduction

‘There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless’ (Hymes, 1971 cited in Brumfit and Johnson, 1979:15).

With this thesis, I initially aimed to find if, next to knowledge of grammar, learners’ language competence entails sufficient knowledge of the L2 language used in context.

That L2 learners’ speech act performances should deviate from L1 speakers’ is suggested by various second language acquisition studies, such as Wolfson (1989). Wolfson studied learners of English’ abilities to conform to American English compliment culture in which this speech act serves to establish and maintain solidarity. He found that learners, as opposed to native speakers of American English, prefer to give no response at all when faced with a compliment. By doing so i.e. failing to conform to target language norms, Wolfson argues that learners deprive themselves the opportunities to establish relationships with native speakers. Trosborg (1995), who studied Danish learners’ production of requests, found that, on the whole, learner requests were less well prepared in addition to less well supported in comparison with native English speaker requests. Consequently, the Danish learners’ production of requests was generally less attractive (Trosborg, 1995: 306).

Planning for and writing this thesis, I was much inspired by Trosborg’s mentioned study, ‘Requestive strategies in non-native and native speakers of English’ (1995). Introduced to her work, I was immediately captured by an introductory statement, with which I completely agree:

Foreign language learners must be given the opportunity to develop areas of communicative competence such as sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence, which has resulted in a widespread acknowledgement of the importance of teaching pragmatic functions. However, despite an innovation in syllabus design, studies of classroom interaction have revealed that the development in learners of discourse competence and of sociolinguistic competence, in particular, is still a neglected area in classroom interaction (Trosborg, 1995: preface)

Although written in 1995, it is my experience that even today (2012); Trosborg’s statement is applicable to much of L2 classroom teaching in Denmark. Even with the impact of a second language such as English having globally increased through e.g. media and internet communication (Crystal, 2003:90), it is thus my belief that in L2 classroom teaching a shift of emphasis towards more pragmatics may be needed.

Inspired by Trosborg's study in addition to my own experiences as a pupil in Denmark, in this thesis I decided to focus on the pragmatic competence of Danish learners of English. More specifically, I chose to investigate how Danish upper secondary school learners attending 3rd year A- level English perform a particular speech act. Since I also aimed to shed light on the necessity for more research on understudied speech acts, I decided to focus on the speech act *reminders*. Reminders are moreover closely related to requests, which I expected would facilitate comparison with Trosborg's (1995) study findings.

At their age and level of proficiency, my target participants have usually acquired instructed English for approximately 9 years, and have additionally been excessively (even if passively) exposed to English outside a classroom setting from much before. After completion of upper secondary school, many pupils either apply for universities in Denmark or go abroad to study in e.g. England and the US, in either case needing their English competence. At their level of proficiency, therefore, it may be argued that the learners need at least some level of pragmatic competence.

In addition to the Danish learners, it was necessary to include a secondary informant group of native English speakers, against whose answers the Danish' would be tested. With luck, I encountered an American high school class, who were much willing to cooperate on this project. Being of nature *American* English speakers, these participants' answers would naturally reflect American English communicative and cultural norms, which would, to an unknown extent, have differed had they been e.g. British or Australian English speakers. I should have liked to include also other native English native speakers but due to restrictions, I included only the American English group. I predicted that, equal to the rest of the Western world, Danish youth are greatly exposed to American English since '...it exercises a greater influence on the way English is developing world wide than does any other regional variety...' (Crystal, 2003: 127).

I decided to perform my thesis survey by means of a Discourse Completion Questionnaire/Task. A great advantage, I predicted the DCT would easily allow me to construct self-chosen set of hypothetical contexts in which the performance of a *reminding* is required by a given situation.

Reading Johansen's (2008) 'A comparative study of gratitude expressions in Norwegian and English from an interlanguage pragmatic and second language acquisition research perspective' inspired to look at the extent to which, when they differed from native English speaker norms, my learners' communicative norms might stem from L1 transfer. Just like Trosborg, in her study Johansen emphasises how second language teaching should acknowledge the importance of such extra linguistic routines of the second language in use in that the learners otherwise may turn to L1 strategies of behaviour when performing in L2. Both Johansen and Trosborg found that Norwegian and Danish L2 learners respectively performed different from English speakers, and that by choosing politeness strategies different from the ones generally preferred by native speakers, non-native speakers potentially (even when unintentionally) come across as impolite. Presented in Section 3.6, the mentioned studies, however, interestingly came to different conclusions on the extent to which transfer was an important explanation of the learners' L2 behaviour, for which reason I decided to compare and contrast my eventual findings with both studies (see Section 5.5).

It is my overall hope and intention that with this thesis I may contribute to shed light on how Danish advanced level learners perform the impositive and much understudied speech act reminders in English. With a profound interest in the learners' pragmatic competence, I am importantly *not* aiming to undermine the importance of learners' grammatical competence. It is, by nature, a matter of thesis priority.

In the following chapter, I present my theoretical background before presenting my main research questions addressed, the essence of which is indicated in this thesis introduction.

2. Speech acts and politeness

In the following chapter, I briefly introduce and define the fields of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, which constitute the thesis' main theoretical background. I then present and discuss the particular pragmatic theories relevant to my thesis, first and foremost the *speech act* theory as proposed by Austin and *politeness theory* by Brown and Levinson.

2.1 Pragmatics

As a linguistic field, pragmatics was introduced by Morris (1938) who distinguishes pragmatics from semantics arguing:

One may study the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable. This relation will be called the *semantical dimension of semiosis*...Or the object of study may be the relation of signs to interpreters. This relation will be called the *pragmatical dimension of semiosis*...and the study of this dimension will be named *pragmatics*... (Morris, 1938 cited in Recanati 2008)

This definition has, however, been extensively rephrased since, and in 1983 Leech suggested we see pragmatics as '...the study of how utterances have meanings in situations' (Leech, 1983: x). As linguistic fields, Leech noted how semantics and pragmatics are distinctive yet interrelated. Both concerned with 'meaning', Leech suggested the following distinction: '...meaning in pragmatics is defined relative to a speaker or user of the language, whereas meaning in semantics is defined purely as a property of expressions in a given language, in abstraction from particular situations, speakers, or hearers' (ibid.:6).

Not only did Leech propose a reformulation, he also established the discipline of pragmatics as an independent study. Emphasising the importance of the study of the *use of* language, Leech claimed that, in its broadest sense, grammar must be separated from pragmatics (ibid.: x) and rather than subjecting one to the other, these should be considered disciplines of equal rank. The distinction of disciplines is well illustrated with the words of Sperber and Wilson:

'...the grammar can only help determine the possibilities of the interpretation. How the hearer sets about narrowing down and choosing among these possibilities is a separate question. It is one that grammarians, but not pragmatists can ignore...' (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:10)

Thus, pragmatics embraces the co-operative act which is communication, and arguably '...the object of linguistics must ultimately be the instrument of communication used by the speech community' (Labov, 1972: 187). Echoing Leech, in 1995 Thomas classified pragmatics as an

equally important level of linguistic description to phonology, syntax, semantics and discourse analysis arguing: ‘Like the other levels, it has its own theories, methodologies and underlying assumptions’ (Thomas, 1995:184). Studying pragmatics and aspects of meaning in context, we thus touch upon areas beyond the remaining linguistic levels.

As an independent linguistic branch, pragmatics is rather young, and not until the 1980s did it become common to discuss the discipline in general textbooks on linguistics (Thomas, 1995:1). With its origin in semantics, pragmatics has evidently developed quickly since the 1980s, but although widely accepted as an independent linguistic discipline today, opinions may differ over the boundary between semantics and pragmatics (Finch, 2003:153).

In this thesis, I aim to investigate and analyse communicative strategies of a particular group of L2 learners. I then look at the pragmatic aspects of their performances in isolation from the grammatical aspects, semantic aspects, etc. In agreement with my aims, I adopt the mentioned points of view of respectively Leech and Thomas and consider pragmatics to constitute an independent linguistic discipline, arguing that knowledge of the assignment of meaning in context is equally important to knowledge of a language’s grammatical structure.

2.2 A sociolinguistic aspect

As a discipline, sociolinguistics is defined:

...the study of the relationship between **language use** and the **structure of society**. It takes into account such factors as *the social background of both the speaker and the addressee...the relationship between speaker and addressee...and the context and manner of the interaction...* maintaining that they are crucial to an understanding of both the structure and function of the language used in a situation. (Radford et. al, 2009: 14)

In line with this, sociolinguistic competence refers to ‘...the sociocultural rules of use i.e. the system of rules which determines the appropriateness of a given utterance in a given social context’ (Trosborg, 1995: 37).

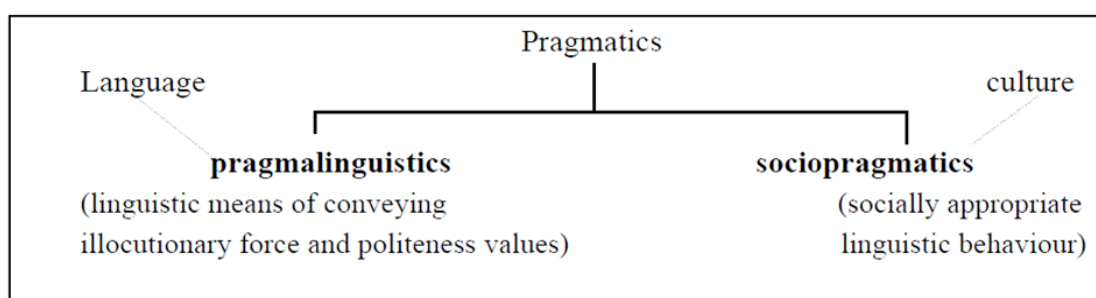
As further commented below, the distinction between sociolinguistics and pragmatics is arguably somewhat vague, nevertheless usefully maintained in that:

...sociolinguistics is mainly concerned with the systematic linguistic correlates of relatively *fixed* and *stable* social variables (such as origin, social class, ethnicity, sex, age, etc.) on the way an individual speaks. *Pragmatics*, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with describing the linguistic correlates of relatively *changeable* features

of that same individual (such as relative status, social role) and the way in which the speaker exploits his/her (socio)linguistic repertoire in order to achieve a particular goal. (Thomas, 1995:185)

That said, the extent to which the two disciplines overlap is arguably such that it may be difficult to keep the disciplines separate for analytic purpose. Thus, studies in pragmatics always depend and build upon sociolinguistics, which tells us of the individual's resources, whereas pragmatics tells us what the individual does with these resources (Thomas, 1995:185).

As illustrated below, language and culture, and consequently pragmatics and sociolinguistics, constitute a continuum: evident from their performance in a given language, speakers' pragmatic competence is inherently bound to their understanding of the particular culture in which they perform:



*Fig. 1. The pragmatic continuum: language - culture.
(Based on Leech 1983 & Thomas 1983)*

Figure 1 *The pragmatic continuum: language-culture (Based on Leech 1983 & Thomas 1983 in Bou Franch, 1998:8)*

According to the pragmatic continuum (Bou Franch, 1998: 8), the appropriateness of form is closely related to that of meaning. Discussing the difficulties in determination of learners' errors, in Section 3.4 I reintroduce the terms sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence, arguing that it may be relevant to look at speakers' pragmalinguistic competence as separate from their sociopragmatic one. With the introduction of my survey findings in Chapter 5, this supposed usefulness is consequently confirmed.

Introducing sociolinguistics, I want to emphasise that speakers' communicative strategies in given contexts of language use interrelate with – and depend on – more stable social and cultural aspects. While restrictions of time and space at present prevent me from analysing the impact of otherwise central factors in sociolinguistic behaviour such as gender, age and

ethnicity (see Gumperz, 1982), the nature of my thesis requires that I devote some space to comment on the role and impact of the stable speech community in which my target survey participants live and function. In Chapter 3, I therefore discuss the language situation in Denmark, and argue that the society in which speakers live and function constitutes an important *sociocultural context* which affects what they consider *socially appropriate* linguistic behaviour.

2.3 Speech Acts

As understood and adopted for the present purpose, the idea of ‘speech acts’ was introduced by the philosopher J. L. Austin in *How to do Things with Words*, 1962. Today, Austin’s terminology and work is so well recognised that speech acts remain one of the central phenomena that any general pragmatic theory must account for (Levinson, 1983: 226). Thus, even those only remotely introduced to the discipline of pragmatics have usually heard of Austin’s notion of speech acts, which has come to foreshadow many of the issues which are of major importance in pragmatics (Thomas, 1995: 28). What was later to become this famous theory on speech acts, J. L. Austin initially set out with a reaction against the logical positivists and their *truth conditional semantics*, to which he objected: ‘...that the business of a ‘statement’ can only be to ‘describe’ some state of affairs or to ‘state some fact’, which it must do either truly or falsely’ (Austin, 1999:3). As a philosopher, Austin was concerned with peoples’ ordinary language, arguing that with their everyday use of language, people produce and understand utterances which are *not* verifiable in terms of any truth/falsity value. Thus, when uttered in the appropriate context of utterance very few competent hearers would not add the adequate meaning to an utterance such as ‘Did you remember to bring my math book?’ and understand the intention behind its production. That is, although not analytically testable, the sentence still produces a meaning with its audience. Although challenging the view of the logical positivists, it was not Austin’s intention to rule out the existence of utterances which *can* be classified from truth-conditional conditions i.e. be tested out empirically (Thomas, 1995: 28-31). On the contrary, at the beginning of his argumentation, Austin suggested that we simply make a distinction between ‘constatives’ i.e. those utterances which can be judged in terms of truth/falsity, and ‘performatives’ i.e. those which cannot be classified in terms of truth/falsity and which further do not ‘describe’ or report anything (Austin, 1999:64). As a pronounced characteristic, the performative utterances would require

a so-called performative verb presented in first person, declarative, indicative, active and simple present tense (Thomas, 1995:32).

Although importantly breaking with the truth conditional semantics, Austin eventually changed and modified his initial approach, for which Thomas (1995) suggests the following main reasons:

There is no formal (grammatical) way of distinguishing performative verbs from other sorts of verbs...The presence of a performative verb does not guarantee that the action is performed...There are ways of doing things with words which do not involve the use of performative verbs. (Thomas, 1995:44)

A necessary step in his argumentation, Austin came to modify his theory and eventually to differentiate between three aspects of every performance of a given utterance. With these new dimensions, Austin brought about a differentiation between what a speaker *says* and what this speaker wants to carry out *by* saying this, i.e. the *force* behind the utterance. Thus the act *of* saying something was dubbed the locutionary act (Austin, 1999: 69) and the performance of an act *in* saying something the illocutionary act (ibid.). Finally, Austin dubbed the act performed *by* saying something a perlocutionary act. Whereas the two former aspects are within the speaker's scope of communication, the perlocution of an illocutionary act is directly linked to the hearer since 'Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts or actions of the audience or of the speaker, or of other persons...' (Austin, 1999: 70). When a speaker e.g. warns a hearer of something, the hearer's reaction or the utterance's perlocutionary effect results from this utterance's illocution (ibid.: 71).

With the development of his theory, Austin's main object of study became the illocution, hence the utterance rather than the sentence. Originally used to refer to an utterance and 'the total situation in which the utterance is issued', today, pragmatics takes *speech act* to refer to the illocutionary act (Thomas, 1995: 51).

Throughout this thesis, I will be particularly interested in the illocutionary dimension of participants' utterances. Although not investigated in this study, I, however, acknowledge the importance of the perlocutionary aspect of any communicative act. Thus, in her study on Chinese speakers' classification of speech acts, Si Liu (2011) found that rather than the

illocutionary points, speakers based their classification of speech acts upon perlocutionary effects. Also Bardovi- Harlig and Hartford (1993, cited in Billmyer and Varghese 2000:519) found that non-native speakers responded most like native speakers when hearer response was included in the discourse completion task instrument for speech acts requiring a reaction such as rejections. That being said, the findings of Rose (1992, (cited in Billmyer and Varghese 2000:519) contradict this supposed perlocutionary importance. Thus, in her study, Rose compared data elicited by situations with and without a hearer response added after the situation to find that the appendance of a hearer response had no significant effect on the data elicited.

When people communicate, communication sometimes fails, and it is not uncommon that speakers fail to succeed with the communicative purpose they set out with. All the same, communicators continuously choose to perform utterances in which the locution and illocutionary force behind are not identical, since

All competent adult speakers of a language can predict or interpret the intended illocutionary force reasonably accurately most of the time – human beings could simply not operate if they had no idea at all how their interlocutor would react... (Thomas, 1995: 50)

And further:

The initial assessment in a conversational exchange yields hypotheses about activities or activity types being proposed or enacted...It sets up expectations about what the likely communicative outcomes are, what topics can be brought up, what can be expressed in words and thus- to use Brown and Levinson's (1978) phrase-be put on record, and what must be implied by building on tacit misunderstandings. (Gumperz, 1982: 207)

Rather than taking a sentence's literal meanings as the point of departure, rational speakers commonly *expect* a distinction between what is *said* and what is *meant*, and after Austin's groundbreaking theory on speech acts, fellow philosopher P. Grice contributed to the theory of speech acts with the notion of *conversational implicature*, proposing how a hearer goes from what a speaker says to what he/she actually means (Grice, 1989:24). With the assumption that in communication speakers generally co-operate, Grice suggested the following conversational principle: 'Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged' (Grice, 1989:26). In accordance with this principle, Grice further established four maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner (ibid.).

With the notion of conversational implicatures, Grice extended the theory of speech acts emphasising what speakers generate rather than explicitly say with the aim that the hearer infers the intention behind (ibid.:24-26). In this way, communication is emphatically a cooperative act and the hearer has an active part in the creation of meaning.

Stemming from philosophy, Grice's work has much inspired later pragmatic research including Sperber and Wilson (1986), whose famous *relevance theory* builds on Grice's maxim of Relation.

In the present thesis, I investigate how a speaker chooses to convey reminders, and the limited scope of my survey does not permit me to take into analysis a hearer's perspective. For this reason, I will not be using Grice's work as theoretical background for analysis. Presented in Section 2.6, however, I will be using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, and arguing that speakers take use of indirectness in certain threatening communicative situations, the work of Brown and Levinson is inspired by Grice's theory, for which reason it was necessary to introduce here.

In addition to Grice, notable contributions to the theory of speech acts include that of R. Searle, who was influenced by both Austin and Grice. Aiming to systemise and formalise the work of his former teacher, Austin, Searle adopted and modified the notion of illocutionary acts. Searle's speech act theory may be summarised as: 'a theory of language is part of a theory of action' (Searle, 1969 cited in Leech, 1983:20). Inspired by Grice, it was Searle's belief that meaning is defined in terms of what speech act speakers perform relative to hearers (ibid.:17). In communication, Searle suggested that speakers act according to a set of 'regulative rules', which, as opposed to 'constitutive rules', operate according to the principles of pragmatics (Leech, 1983:21). Thus:

Regulative rules regulate a pre-existing activity, an activity whose existence is logically independent of the rules...Regulative rules characteristically take the form of or can be paraphrased as imperatives... (Searle, 1974:34)

To perform illocutionary acts is to engage in a rule-governed form of behavior...I intend therefore to explicate the notion of an illocutionary act by stating a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the performance of a particular kind of illocutionary act, and extracting from it a set of semantical rules for the use of the expression (or syntactic device) which marks the utterance as an illocutionary act of that kind. (Searle, 1977:40)

In this way, Searle proposed we classify speech acts as according to a determined set of rules termed propositional *content* rules, *preparatory* rules, *sincerity* rules and *essential* rules.

According to Searle, the successful performance of the different types of speech acts further depend on certain felicity conditions, in the following exemplified for the speech act *requests*:

Propositional Content	Future act <i>A</i> of <i>H</i>
Preparatory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>H</i> is able to do <i>A</i>. <i>S</i> believes <i>H</i> is able to do <i>A</i> 2. It is not obvious to both <i>S</i> and <i>H</i> that <i>H</i> will do <i>A</i> in the normal course of events in his own accord
Sincerity	<i>S</i> wants <i>H</i> to do <i>A</i>
Essential	Counts as an attempt to get <i>H</i> to do <i>A</i>

Table 1 *Extract from Searle's felicity conditions (Searle, 1974: 66-67)*

If any one of these conditions is not met or is challenged by the hearer, the act may not be successfully performed (Ellis, 2008:161).

Greatly inspired by his teacher though he was, Searle differentiated from Austin proposing these 'communicative rules'. A closer inspection at Searle's elaboration of speech acts shows it might be problematic to specify semantic rules for a pragmatic phenomenon. It is in particularly problematic that certain of his felicity conditions listed as applicable to specific types of speech acts may actually apply also to other types. Thus, if I thank someone for giving me a present, it is quite possible and commonly accepted that I may be trying to express an ironic proposition rather than sincere thanking. As Leech points out, Searle's account of speech acts is much too narrow: 'Any account of illocutionary force which defies it in terms of rules...will present a limited and regimented view of human communication...' (Leech, 1983: 23).

As a whole, it becomes problematic to classify speech acts according to rules, whichever the kind, and within pragmatics I agree with Thomas that we should rather operate with principles, which also allow for borderline cases (Thomas, 1995:107-08).

Developing his work, Searle's theoretical framework eventually came to an important distinction between *direct* and *indirect* speech acts (Searle, 1969). A *direct speech act* then denotes those utterances which contain a transparent relationship between form and function. Conversely, indirect speech acts are those in which the illocutionary force is *not* derivable from the surface structure (Ellis, 2008:161).

The flaws of his theory set aside; Searle's distinction between direct and indirect speech acts remains a central contribution to pragmatics: Whereas speakers conventionally use e.g. an imperative linguistic structure to perform a direct request and a declarative one to perform a direct statement, the force behind *indirect* speech acts cannot be detected simply from the *locution* alone. In addition to the words uttered, the speaker relies on the situational context to infer the intention behind them and thereby the intended meaning. In Section 2.6, I take this further, arguing that although speakers may gain time with the use of a direct over an indirect communicative strategy, they consciously and seemingly unproblematically prefer indirect strategies.

Acknowledging the various theoretical problems mentioned, the contributions to the understanding of illocutionary acts by respectively Austin and Searle remain central to almost any type of pragmatic research, and to the present thesis they constitute invaluable theoretical framework.

Building on this background, the following section presents and accounts for the *particular* speech act investigated in my survey.

2.4 Reminders

When it comes to the categorisation of speech acts, various suggestions have been made and broadly, we may distinguish between those acts which occur *pre-event*, such as reminders and requests, and those that take place *post-event* such as apologies and thanking (Ellis, 2008).

With the idea that all illocutionary acts could be made explicit through the use of performative sentences, once having determined that all utterances are performatives, Austin

introduced a five-way taxonomy, which would account for all potential performative verbs in English: *Verdictives* (acts that consist of delivering a finding) *Excercitives* (acts of giving a decision for or against a course of action), *Commissives* (acts whose points is to commit the speaker to a course of action) *Behabitives* (expressions of attitudes towards the conduct, fortunes or attitudes of others) and *Expositives* (acts of expounding of views, conducting of arguments, and clarifying) (Saddock, 2004 in Horn and Ward, 2008:64). With his taxonomy, Austin, however, acknowledged its potential ambiguity in application to particular examples. By its unclear nature, there is still strong disagreement on Austin's ultimate taxonomy (ibid.), and referring to the act of reminding, I instead turn to the reformulation of Austin's taxonomy found with Searle. According to Searle, speech acts should be classified based on similarities and differences. In my thesis, I investigate speakers' strategies of reminders, and inspired by Searle's original proposal, I adopt the following re-definition of impositive speech acts as:

...speech acts performed by the speaker to influence the intentional behavior of the hearer in order to get the latter to perform, primarily for the benefit of the speaker, the action directly specified or indirectly suggested by the proposition. (Haverkate, 1984 in Trosborg, 1995:188)

Recent pragmatic research (2009-2012¹) on speech acts has focused on e.g. thanking (Carlos de Pablos-Ortega, 2011), evaluation (Blackwell, 2010) and apologies (Long, 2010) in addition to requests (Economidou- Kogetsitis, 2010).

In second language acquisition research *requests* have received considerable attention (Ellis, 2008:173). In *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (2008), Ellis the lists a great variety of request studies ranging from e.g. Waiters in 1979 to Rose in 2000 (see Ellis, 2008:174-178). That requests are commonly studied is further supported by Journal of Pragmatic's 56 hits on request related articles identified within the past three years only (i.e. 2009-2012)².

For the present purpose, the object of study will be *reminders*, closely related to requests. Taking the theory of speech acts further, Brown and Levinson (see Section 2.6) classify both reminders and requests as belonging to the following group of speech acts:

¹ Searches by Sciencedirect.com:

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleListURL&_method=list&_ArticleListID=-9567133&_st=5&searchtype=a&originPage=rslt_list&_acct=C000036598&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=674998&md5=e16f382e87d6dfa71fa577f48e3a0cbc entered 26th of October 2012

² http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleListURL&_method=list&_ArticleListID=-9539752&_st=1&searchtype=a&originPage=rslt_list&_acct=C000036598&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=674998&md5=5059597a835c617c1fff7aaee9fe5a6c entered 26th October, 2012

Those acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act A: reminders (S indicate that H should remember to do some A). (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 324)

While ‘reminders’ may be used to refer to various types of illocutionary force, some of which are beneficiary to both the speaker and the hearer, I will here be referring only to reminders understood as acts which are intrinsically imposing on the hearer and thus produced for the benefit of the *speaker* only or mainly. In agreement with Ellis’ definition of requests as ‘inherently imposing’ speech acts (Ellis, 2008:172) reminders require considerable ‘face-work’, and moreover reminders arguably resemble requests that:

The choice of linguistic realization depends on a variety of social factors to do with the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, the perceived degree of imposition which a particular request makes on the hearer (i.e. it involves a choice of politeness strategies), and the goal of the act (for example, requesting goods or initiating joint activity). (ibid.)

Summed up, I have focused on reminders for the following reasons:

- 1) It is a surprisingly understudied speech act type³, and e.g. Ellis 2008 suggests for more studies on other kinds of speech acts than those most commonly studied (such as requests). I thus agree with Ellis and wish to shed light on the need for more studies on speech acts such as reminders.
- 2) Being speech acts closely related by nature, I predict that, many times, reminders build on the act of requesting. Since they are related, I moreover predict that my participants’ strategies of reminders are more easily compared to results from Trosborg’s (1995) study on requests.
- 3) Just like requests (Trosborg, 1995: 146), reminders are, as opposed to e.g. thanking and complimenting, inherently imposing on the hearer, whose personal space is invaded. In the following chapter, I present and discuss pragmatic politeness arguing that a speaker’s successful transmission of speech acts depends on his or her accommodation of the language and culture’s politeness routines. Thus, in speech act production, speakers calculate their relationship with hearers as well as the degree of *imposition* by the *illocution* to ensure that the harmonious social relations between

³ Searching sciencedirect.co: pub-date > 1991 and ALL (**reminding**) [Journals(Arts and Humanities)] gave no results on any particular studies of reminders (>1992) in the field of Arts and Humanities.

themselves and the hearer is not endangered (Ellis, 2008: 161). In Chapter 3, I argue that this may additionally be challenging to language learners.

Reminders established as the particular speech act of interest, the following sections propose that the actual performance of speech acts is strongly governed by and interdependent on principles of politeness. As briefly introduced above, in the upcoming chapter I follow up and comment more on the nature of ‘harmonious social relations’ between speaker and hearer and argue that these are important to the speaker’s choice of communicative strategy in speech act production.

2.5 Politeness

In 1995, Thomas writes that politeness is an integral part of pragmatics to which it has almost become a sub-discipline (Thomas, 1995:149). As understood in pragmatics, politeness has nothing to do with deference or register, and it does not refer to ‘...a real-world goal (i.e. politeness interpreted as a genuine desire to be pleasant to others or as the underlying motivation for an individual’s linguistic behaviour)...’ (ibid.:150). In pragmatics, politeness is concerned with which communicative strategies speakers regard as the most appropriate in which situational contexts with which hearers. As such, there is not necessarily a direct line between the linguistic form and the perceived politeness of a speech act (Thomas, 1995:156). Therefore, knowledge of politeness behaviour requires that speakers possess a range of both linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge. Throughout this thesis, I follow this line of thought, arguing that second language communicative competence entails knowledge of politeness routines in particular contexts of situations with different hearers.

Within pragmatics, several linguists have contributed with research on *politeness*. Inspired by Paul Grice’s co-operative maxims (see Section 2.3), Lakoff (1973) proposed a *conversational maxim* approach to politeness. Alternatively, Leech (1983), equally inspired by Grice, established a *Politeness Principle* as follows: ‘Minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs; Maximize (all things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs’. Following this principle, Leech proposed six maxims of respectively *Tact*, *Generosity*, *Approbation*, *Modesty*, *Agreement* and *Sympathy*. Formulated in the imperative mode, Leech’s maxims are, just like Grice’s, somewhat unfortunate and may confuse the reader (Thomas, 1995:160). A possible solution, Spencer-Oatley suggests that Leech’s

maxims are better seen as pragmatic constraints that help manage the potentially conflicting face wants and sociality rights of different interlocutors (Spencer- Oatley 2002: 531).

It is not in the interest of the present thesis that I investigate participants' strategies according to a set of maxims, which I agree are unfortunately formulated as *rules* rather than *descriptions* of speakers' behaviour. Acknowledging Leech's great contributions to pragmatics though I am, it is then another theory of politeness, which I take as to constitute the central theoretical pragmatic framework of my thesis. Thus in the following section, I discuss politeness in pragmatic research and suggest that it was in particular Brown and Levinson's *politeness theory* which contributed to the subject's continued popularity. I argue that to understand and analyse speakers' communicative choices, we have to understand and adopt the notion of a public *face*.

2.6 Politeness Theory

First published in 1978, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory centred on speakers' public 'face', has come to generate an enormous amount of research on politeness. As understood in sociological or sociolinguistic contexts, it was Goffman who in 1967 introduced 'face' as: '...the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact...' (1967:5). Inspired by Goffman, Brown and Levinson adapted and modified face to refer to a two-sided but interrelated phenomenon in human communication and 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects' (Brown and Levinson, 1999:322). Thus every human engaged in a communicative act has a public face of interrelated positive and negative character:

Negative face: 'the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction-i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition', later restated as 'the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others.'

Positive face: 'the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) by interactants', later restated as 'the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others' (ibid.)

In their description of face, Brown and Levinson stress that this phenomenon is based on a principle of *universality*. Thus, in communication, people generally cooperate simply as a

matter of economics: because we want to maintain and save our own public self-image in communication, we are equally prepared to save and maintain that of others. According to Brown and Levinson any comparative social theory must be based on universal principles and yet have culture-internal supplication:

While the content of face will differ in different cultures (what the exact limits are to personal territories, and what the publicly relevant content of personality consists in), we are assuming that the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal. (Brown and Levinson, 1999:322)

Face respect is not an 'unequivocal right' between humans. Since communication is, however, based on people's general cooperation, speakers reasonably expect that any hearer with 'rational capacities', wants to maintain and respect the social relations already existing between them. Thus 'Everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained' (ibid.). In accordance with respectively the negative and positive face of both speaker and hearer, politeness theory suggests that we rely on *positive* and *negative politeness* in communication. Whereas the sense and scope of 'negative politeness' is somewhat predictable i.e. politeness directed towards the hearer's negative face, preserving his or her claims of territory and self-determination, 'positive politeness' refers to how communicators cater to the hearer's want to be desirable to others and have their own wants approved of (more on this below).

In communication, speakers then manage to interact taking care of their audience's face at the same time as they preserve their own public self-image and moreover estimate the potential *threat ranking* of the speech act (Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to Brown and Levinson, certain speech acts, denominated *face threatening acts* or abbreviated as FTA, by nature run contrary to politeness and the face wants of the hearer and/or the speaker (ibid.:1999:323). The performance of these acts is then potentially damaging to the face of the speaker and/or the hearer. Though an act may run contrary to both communicators, an act is primarily *either* threatening to the speaker *or* the hearer's negative *or* positive face.

Based on the extent to which they are primarily threatening to one or the other face of one or the other speakers, Brown and Levinson divide speech acts into categories (Brown and Levinson, 1999:324-25). For the present purpose (see Section 2.4), it is not relevant to mention all such categories; I am interested only in those speech acts primarily threatening to the hearer's negative face:

Acts that primarily threaten the addressee's (H's) negative-face want by indicating (potentially) that the speaker (S) does not intend to avoid impeding H's freedom of action (1999:324)

And more specifically:

Those acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in doing so put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act, A.

...(c) reminders (S indicates that H should remember to do some A) (ibid.).

As it appears from figure 2 below, politeness theory suggests that according to the situational context, any speaker who finds him- or herself in a communicative situation requiring the performance of a face-threatening act always has a certain range of options based on degree of indirectness and ranking from opting out of performance to acting boldly on-record without redressive action:

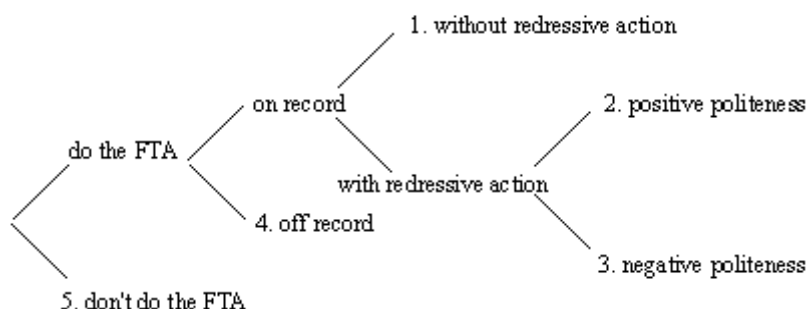


Figure 2 Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 327)

Speakers always have an initial option to not perform the given face-threatening act otherwise required by a communicative situation, and opting for this strategy gives the speaker the obvious advantage that he/she does not risk that any of the parties involved lose face. That being said, a speaker who chooses *not* to perform the FTA will never achieve what he set out to do in the first place, consequently no one benefits from the situation. All the same, there may be countless reasons for which a speaker sometimes chooses to opt out of speech act performance, and whereas Brown and Levinson do not take the matter further, Tanaka (1993 in Thomas, 1995: 174-75) suggests we broadly distinguish between the times a speaker does not perform the FTA with the genuine intention to let the matter drop, from the times he decides to say nothing, but nevertheless wishes the hearer to infer the wish and thereby achieve the perlocutionary effect. Complimenting Tanaka's proposed distinction, Thomas

suggests a third situation: ‘...where there is such a strong expectation that something will be said, that saying nothing is in itself a massive FTA (for example, failing to express condolences to someone on the death of a loved one)’ (Thomas, 1995:175).

In Chapter 4, I present my survey results, where, interestingly, several participants chose to explain or comment on their choice to opt out of performing in particular situations and consequently I take both Tanaka's and Thomas's proposed extensions of Brown and Levinson's opting-out strategy into consideration.

When a speaker *does* decide to perform a face-threatening speech act required by a given context, politeness theory suggests this can be done either *on* or *off record* according to the transparency of the communicative intention. In accordance with the context of culture and situation, speakers may have various reasons for choosing to go off record and present the hearer with a non-transparent utterance. It is this strategy's overarching advantage that what has only been implied but never explicitly said can always be withdrawn, and therefore the speaker can rescue both his and the hearer's face potentially endangered. Among the linguistic realizations which involve this kind of non-transparency between locution and illocution, Brown and Levinson list irony, metaphor and rhetorical questions (Brown and Levinson, 1999:327). Its advantages set aside, the off-record strategy of ‘playing it safe’ often leaves the hearer with an unspecified range of possible interpretations of the utterance and the speaker is therefore not guaranteed the fulfillment of his/her communicative purpose.

When in a communicative situation that requires the production of a given FTA, Brown and Levinson's model gives the speaker a third option of going ‘on record’:

An actor goes on record in doing an act A if it is clear to participants what communicative intention led the actor to do A ... In contrast, if an actor goes off record in doing A, then there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent. (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 327)

The option to go on record is further divided according to whether or not the speaker performs the action with so-called *redressive action*. Going ‘on record without redressive action’ gives the speaker the advantage of an unambiguously attributable intention, and is easily adaptable to situations where ‘(b) the danger to H's face is *very* small, as in offers and requests or suggestions that are clearly in H's interest and do not require great sacrifices of S... and (c) S

is vastly superior in power to H...' (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 328). Given its clear and direct nature, this strategy e.g. applies well to dangerous situations such as emergencies, in which the relevance of face demands is mutually understood as being suspended (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 328). The advantages set aside, going *on record without redressive action* is potentially disadvantageous in situations in which the social distance between the communicators is great and/or situations in which the hearer is of higher social rank than the speaker (see below). In other words, with this strategy, the speaker risks the face of one or both communicators, and its imposing and direct nature means it may be less appealing to speakers when interacting with a person with whom they are not intimately related.

These before mentioned options set aside, with the aims and goals to preserve the face of both communicators and at the same time actually go on-record and perform the required speech act, speakers have the solution to go '*on record with redressive action*' by means of conventionalised indirectness (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 329). This communicative strategy gives the speaker the advantage to go *on record* with the speech act and at the same preserve the *off-record* effect of not imposing by the use of conventional indirectness (ibid.). According to Brown and Levinson, conventionalised expressions can refer not only to those established by an entire community but also to e.g. passwords and codes mutually understood between as few as two individuals.

In correspondence with the public 'face', Brown and Levinson propose politeness as a two-sided but interrelated phenomenon which speakers take into account when engaged in communicative acts:

Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of H, the positive self-image that he claims for himself...is approach-based; it 'anoints' the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, S wants H's wants...

Negative politeness... is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying H's negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. *Negative politeness* is thus essentially avoidance based... (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 328)

Deciding the eventual communicative strategy, Brown and Levinson suggest speakers take account of the following social factors:

1. The 'social distance' (D) of S and H (a symmetric relation)
2. The relative power (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation)

3. The absolute ranking (R) of impositions in the particular culture.

Brown and Levinson thus propose that a speaker calculates the rank of speech act imposition in the given cultural setting of an utterance by adding the hearer's relative power over him or her, i.e. the vertical disparity between them in a hierarchical structure, and the social distance, i.e. the horizontal disparity between them. In short, this calculation is formulated:

$$W_A = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_A \text{ (ibid.)}.$$

... W_x is the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTA_x , $D(S, H)$ is the value that measures the social distance between S and H , $P(H, S)$ is a measure of the power that H has over S , and R_x is a value that measures the degree to which the FTA_x is rated an imposition in that culture. (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 332)

The success of communicative calculations is intrinsically depended on both actors' presumption that the social variables are mutually acknowledged (ibid.: 331). With the communicative intent to remind a new teacher to give him back an essay as promised (see Situation 1 in Appendix 1), the speaker who wishes to avoid face loss should acknowledge both the social distance and relative power existing between him and the hearer.

The role and importance of speakers' mutual understanding of these social variables is supported by empirical studies. In her study 'Evaluation as a pragmatic act in Spanish film narratives', S. Blackwell (2010) found that the relationships of power and social distance between the speaker and the hearer, together with background knowledge, constrained and made up the context for twenty Spanish narrators when evaluating *the pear film* (1980). Supporting the idea that social distance and power are central variables in speakers' calculation of face threat, Beebe and Cummings found that length, tone and other features of subjects' discourse completion responses will be affected if they imaginarily substitute a stranger constellation with a hearer whom they know (Beebe and Cummings, 1996: 73).

In addition to social distance and power, Brown and Levinson suggest that the indirectness of a speaker's strategy is based on the calculation of the *rank of imposition* (R) of each individual speech act. Supporting the impact of this variable, Blum-Kulka and House found that social factors tend to be perceived relative to specific situations and that e.g. borrowing of lecture notes between students did not equal cleaning of the kitchen in a shared apartment (Blum-Kulka-House, 1989 cited in Trosborg, 1995: 149).

Building on Brown and Levinson's work with *social distance*, *power* and *rank of imposition*, Thomas proposes that speakers take into account also a fourth variable when calculating how indirect to be. She terms this variable *rights and obligations* and explains: 'This dimension is needed in order to explain a situation in which a speech act involving a major imposition is performed with a minimal degree of indirectness' (Thomas, 1995: 131). The factor is arguably needed to explain why speakers seemingly act against e.g. power and social distance in situations such as when someone takes your seat on a plane or moves in front of you in a line. In such situations, most speakers would, regardless of hearer position, arguably insist in their rights and the hearer's obligations.

In general, the communicative strategy of indirectness is both costly and risky since it requires more time for the speaker to produce and longer for the hearer to process (ibid.:120). With the alternative use of a direct strategy, speakers would avoid the risk of ambiguity of expression in addition to saving time. This being said, speakers continuously and seemingly unproblematically prefer to use indirect communicative strategies. Opting for an indirect strategy is thus not secondary to opting for a direct one. To the contrary: in everyday communication speakers tend to opt for indirectness as 'normal talk' (House, 1993: 164).

According to Brown and Levinson's model of politeness, there are certain contextual settings involving certain hearers which favour an indirect strategy to a direct one, and arguing for the model's universality of nature yet cultural particularities, Thomas (1995:124) echoes Brown and Levinson's social parametres and sums up the four main social factors to govern speakers' indirectness in communication:

- The relative power of the speaker over the hearer
- The social distance between the speaker and the hearer
- The degree to which X is rated an imposition in culture Y
- Relative rights and obligations between the speaker and the hearer

For the present purpose, I have chosen to adopt and investigate the impact of *all four* suggested factors governing indirectness. I thus agree with Thomas that whether or not the speaker has the *right* to make a particular demand and whether the hearer has the *obligation* to comply with this are considerations omnipresent to all rational communicators calculating the weight of any FTA. Thus, to understand and explain situations in which the social distance between speakers is great, the speaker does *not* have power over the hearer *and* the imposition

carries some weight, but where the speaker still uses a direct strategy, we may need to look to Thomas' fourth dimension for an explanation.

Studies suggest that some cultures might orient more towards one communicative face than the other. In a comparative study, Sifanou (1992 cited in Huang, 2007:119) compared politeness systems in Britain and Greece with the use of the politeness theoretical understanding of *face*, and found some interesting cultural differences between the two systems: that the politeness system in Greek is more positive-face oriented than the more negative-oriented British one. According to Huang, Sifanou's study '...showed that Brown and Levinson's theory provides a very good general theoretical and descriptive framework for the study of politeness' (Huang, 2007:119). In her study on Norwegian learners of English' expressions of gratitude, Johansen, equally employing the framework of Brown and Levinson, found indications of differences in perceptions of what aspects of face which are paid most attention to. Thus, in general native speakers of English, both British and American, used strategies which appeal to the hearer's positive face meanwhile native speakers of Norwegian used strategies which were also directed towards the hearers' negative face (Johansen, 2008:122). Johansen relates her findings of Norwegians' preference for negative face preservation to Røkaas' statement that according to Norwegian cultural norms, it is important to not impose or become a burden to others (Røkaas, 2000 in Johansen, 2008:123). The particularities of Johansen's findings are further discussed in relation to my own survey analysis and discussion of results, presented in Chapter 5.

The impact of Brown and Levinson's theory in the study of pragmatic politeness being great as it is, the theory has naturally been exposed to a number of criticisms (Thomas, 1995:176). Thus, while Brown and Levinson talk only about the individual face of hearers and speakers, Spencer-Oatley and Xing (2000) argue that since some cultures' preference for face orientation is directed towards groups rather than individuals, this notion is too narrow. In their study, Spencer-Oatley and Xing found that a group of Chinese and British business people seemed to orient towards each other in terms of group rather than individual needs and concerns when relationship and face issues arose during business visits. What is more, Spencer-Oatley (2002) investigated the understanding of 'public face' in Asian cultures aiming '...to identify the rapport management issues that seem to be salient to people in authentic interactions and thereby to gain insights into the fundamental concerns that give rise

to the use of politeness/rapport management strategies' (Spencer-Oatley 2002: 535). Partly due to their non-Western origin hence non-Western perspective, Spencer-Oatley asked some Chinese students, most of whom were recent arrivals in Britain, to keep a record of two interrelated types of communicative incidents with respect to the relation to the hearer: those that left the subjects with some kind of particular *negative* effect and those that had some particular *positive* effect. From the subjects' responses, Spencer-Oatley reports that while some of the incidents clearly point to face- concerns, others were described in terms of rights and obligations. As mentioned above, Spencer-Oatley's previous study with Xing (2000) suggests that some cultures may orient towards each other in terms of group rather than individual, in addition to reports reflecting interpersonal orientation. Moreover, in her latter study, Spencer-Oatley found various incidents of both inter- and intragroup orientation (Spencer-Oatley, 2002:539). That is, several of the Chinese respondents reported of either positive or negative incidents with either English native speakers or other Chinese reflecting their association with native origin thus group belonging (ibid.:538).

Based on her findings, Spencer Oatley (2002:540) proposes that in evaluating speakers' performances we keep the notion of *face* but acknowledge that this consist of two interrelated aspects referring to respectively the individual notion and peoples' sense of group belonging as follows:

Quality face: We have a fundamental desire for people to evaluate us positively in terms of our personal qualities: e.g. our competence, abilities, appearance etc. ...closely associated with our sense of personal self-esteem.

Social identity face: We have a fundamental desire for people to acknowledge and uphold our social identities or roles, e.g. as group leader, valued customer, close friend...*Social identity face* is concerned with the value that we effectively claim for ourselves in terms of social or group roles, and is closely related with our sense of public worth. (Spencer Oatley, 2002:540)

Acknowledging Spencer-Oatley's suggestions, it is my general assumption that Danish culture is primarily more concerned with individuals' face just like many other western societies. Although it would be interesting to see to what extent group orientations are present in Danish pupils' communication, I limit myself to an investigation of individual face.

In this chapter, I have discussed areas of pragmatic research relevant to my thesis and demonstrated why it is in particular the speech act theory and politeness theory which constitute the pragmatic framework of the thesis. In the following chapter, I show how Brown and Levinson's 'possible strategies for doing FTAs' has come to inspire researchers in Second Language Acquisition (see especially Section 3.3), and consequently my own study.

3. Pragmatic competence in second language acquisition

In the following chapter, I present and comment on areas of second language acquisition which are relevant to my thesis. In order to judge what to expect from Danish language learners when it comes to the acquisition of pragmatic competence, I should establish and explain the term ‘second language’ and additionally clarify the language situation in Denmark. With a main focus on the learners’ acquisition of pragmatic competence reflecting Chapter 2 on speech acts and politeness, this chapter further discusses aspects such as the role of classroom setting for L2 acquisition as opposed to naturally occurring ones and the possible role and impact of L1 transfer in L2 performance. Considering the potential impact of pragmatic L1 transfer, I present and draw on some particular and somewhat conflicting findings from the respective studies of Johansen (2008) and Trosborg (1995). With my emphasis on Danish learners and additionally the overall resemblance between requests and reminders (see Section 2.4), special emphasis is on the latter mentioned study of Trosborg.

Finally, building on the theoretical background of Chapters 2 and 3, I present my thesis research questions.

3.1 A ‘second language’

With a broad semantic scope, the frequently used expression ‘second language’ is somewhat confusing. Thus, ‘second language’ may refer to a language which occupies an official status in a country, where it is used as ‘...a medium of communication in such domains as government, the law courts, the media and the educational system’ (Crystal, 2003:4) such as English in India, Nigeria and Singapore. In these countries, learners of English could therefore be said to learn English as a second language. In addition, ‘second language’ may refer to any additional language(s) learners acquire second to their mother tongue, alternatively distinguished as a learner's respective ‘second, third, fourth’ etc. language of acquisition. There are thus two different uses here – one that means the language actually acquired after the mother tongue, but before any other additional language, and one that refers to a broader use, where ‘second language’ means all languages acquired after the mother tongue.

Further complicating the matter, we may distinguish between *foreign* and *second* language learning in that second language learning constitutes the naturalistic learning of a language

used in the community as opposed to *foreign* language learning, which occur ‘...in settings where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom’ (Ellis, 2008:6).

In relation to the present thesis, I predict that the role and impact of English in Denmark has gone much beyond the teaching inside classrooms treated as a ‘decontextualised tool’, and that, consequently, English constitutes more than merely a ‘foreign’ language in Denmark.

Thus, if we apply the distinction between *second* and *foreign* language learning, English in Denmark arguably falls somewhere in between the two extremes. For the present purpose, I will, however, refer to the learners’ ‘second language’ in Ellis’ broader use of the term as covering all languages acquired after the mother tongue irrespective of whether it happens naturalistically or in the classroom.

3.2 The role and impact of age in language acquisition

Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979 cited in Ellis 2008) found that learners who begin to get natural exposure to a second language during childhood achieve higher second-language proficiency than those beginning as adults. The relation between age and L2 acquisition has always been central to second language research and a topic hotly debated (Ortega, 2009:12) and opinions differ as to whether or not is there a so called Critical Period for L2 learning. The neurolinguistic work of Penfield and Roberts (1959 cited in Ortega 2009:12) suggested evidence for a critical age for language (L1) learning in children, estimated to the ninth year. Since the 1950s, several studies have supported this Critical Period for L1 acquisition, and well-known examples of studies include the Genie case (Rymer, 1992); the widely known story of a girl who did not begin language acquisition until after the ‘critical period’. Though reporting on first language acquisition, we might draw parallels from such studies to the acquisition of second languages: ‘For L2 acquisition, as well, it seems plausible to posit that there are sensitive periods for a number of language areas’ (Ortega, 2009:14).

That said, the following extract illustrates how there are certain usefully maintained differences between learners’ acquisition of respectively L1 and L2:

Feature:	L1 acquisition	L2 (foreign language) acquisition
Overall success:	Children normally achieve	Adult L2 learners are very

General failure:	perfect mastery of their L1 Success is guaranteed	unlikely to achieve perfect mastery Complete success is very rare
Variation:	There is little variation among L1 learners with regard to overall success of the path they follow	L2 learners vary in both their degree of success and the path they follow
Goal:	The goal is target language competence	L2 learners may be content with less than target - language competence and may also be more concerned with fluency than accuracy

Table 2: *Differences between L1 and L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2008:108 based on Bley-Vroman 1988)*

According to Bley-Vroman's scheme (reported in Ellis, 2008), complete success is very rare with second language learners, nevertheless the learners' age does matter. Learners who start learning in childhood often achieve higher levels of ultimate proficiency than those who start in adolescence or as adults (Ellis, 2008:20). It is worth noting that in Denmark organised and obligatory teaching of English begins as early as in the 3rd grade⁴, thus much before adolescence.

3.3 Acquiring English in a Danish Classroom Setting

In Denmark, learners of English are arguably much exposed to the L2 beyond the instructed classroom teaching: '...ganske rigtigt lærer børn og unge mennesker meget engelsk I skolen, men samtidig er det tydeligt for de fleste forældre at de unge i langt højere grad end tidligere bruger og udvikler deres engelskkundskaber I fritiden' (Preisler, 1999:12).

In 1999, Preisler performed a quantitative study on the Danish population's own perception of English qualifications using '...et repræsentativt udsnit af den danske befolkning fra 18 år og opefter' (ibid.: 19). Preisler interestingly found that as many as 80 % of the general Danish population confirmed they hear English one to several times a day (ibid.:30). At the same time, only 9% of the respondents confirmed they speak English on a daily basis (ibid.:34).

⁴ 'Læseplan for faget engelsk' (2009),
<http://www.uvm.dk/Service/Publikationer/Publikationer/Folkeskolen/2009/Faelles-Maal-2009-Engelsk/Laeseplan-for-faget-engelsk>. (Accessed 12. 12.11)

Preisler credits much of impact of English on Denmark to the media, and reports that 45% of all commercials on Danish national television, TV2, are in English⁵ (ibid.:13).

Overall, the Danish population is greatly exposed to the English language, and arguably in particular by American English and culture primarily transmitted through various types of media and technology. Even if, as argued by journalist Martin Burcharth, this cultural domination was never consciously adopted by the Danes: 'For én der bor og lever I USA med en fod sikkert plantet i det danske, er det en spøjst oplevelse at se mine landsmænd adoptere amerikanske skikke og tilpasse dem særligt indfødte vilkår uden rigtig at være sig processen bevidst' (Burcharth, 2007). Notwithstanding this statement, I agree with Preisler that we cannot blame the media for passively affecting us: 'Det engelske sprogs indflydelse på dansk sprogbrug...kan kun forklares hvis vi antager at engelsk (og den kultur dette sprog står for) har statusværdi for store grupper af befolkningen' (Preisler, 1999:14).

With its present language status in Denmark, critics argue that English may be threatening the status of Danish as the only language used for official purposes, and Danish politicians continuously present more or less radical language proposals, which result in both debates and protests. To this day, the perhaps most radical suggestion stems from the Danish centre party, De Radikale Venstre, who in 2006 proposed that Denmark make English their official second language⁶. Though such propositions may never come to 'threaten' the status of Danish in any profound manner, today English *is* more than merely a foreign language in Denmark.

It is my belief that in Denmark, English is situated somewhere in between the before discussed definitions of a 'second' and a 'foreign' language with emphasis on the former rather than the latter.

As evident from the previous discussion, it is not only the Danish classroom settings which constitute the background against which L2 learners in Denmark acquire the English language, and Preisler's findings indicate that Danish L2 learners may be much more *passive* than *active* users of English also outside a classroom setting, a view supported by Holmen's findings. Holmen studied Danish high school students' interactions with native speakers of English outside the classroom setting, and characterised the learners' role as 'predominantly passive' (Holmen, 1983 cited in Trosborg, 1995:184).

⁵ This was in 1999

⁶ 'Pkt. 4, Engelsk som Danmarks officielle 2.sprog', 27.7 2006, <http://www.radikale.dk/cms/vis.aspx?aid=61830> (Accessed on 30.05.2012)

In second language research, the distinction between second language acquisition inside and outside a classroom setting is usefully maintained. Overall, educational settings should then be separated from naturally occurring ones in that the former requires conscious attention to rules and principles and puts greater emphasis on mastery of ‘subject matter’ which is treated as a ‘decontextualised’ body of knowledge Ellis (2008). In naturally occurring settings, learners acquire the L2 in informal contexts where they participate and observe without articulating the underlying principles or rules (Ellis, 2008:288). Here, learners primarily treat the L2 as a tool for communication. In educational settings, on the other hand, there is an additional and conscious attention to the *form* of the language (ibid.:773-75), and in effect, it may be difficult for learners to shift between instructed and natural contexts. Thus, Ellis (ibid.:792) points to how studies indicate that natural discourse rarely occurs in classrooms: In a non-instructed setting such as interaction with other non-native speakers in a relaxed atmosphere, L2 learners are participants of equal status who may open and close conversations accordingly. In a classroom setting, however, it is the teacher who ‘...has the right to participate in all exchanges, to initiate exchanges, to decide on length of exchanges, to close exchanges, to include and exclude other participants...’ (ibid.:793).

Pupils’ speech acts performed are restricted to repeating, practicing and informing (Kramsch, 1981 in Trosborg, 1995:133). With reference to previous studies, Trosborg states that it is moreover not unusual that teachers take up as much as 80% of the classroom teaching whereas the remaining 20% is left to be shared between the pupils (Trosborg, 1984; Long-Porter 1985; Loercher 1985 cited in Trosborg 1995:129).

Although Danish children do not begin the obligatory instructed acquisition of English in the 3rd grade, they are probably exposed to and affected by English in informal settings from much before. As a consequence of several years of English classroom teaching, Danish pupils enrolled in A-level English in their 3rd year of upper secondary school are expected to have a high competence in, above all, the English language, but also in cultural and historical aspects⁷ with the aim to both understand and use the English language to act in a globalised world. For their final exam, the advanced-level learners are expected to fulfill the following criteria:

⁷ ‘Bekendtgørelse om STX, Engelsk A, bilag 18’, June 2010,
<https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=132647#B18> (Accessed 22.03.12)

Ved *den skriftlige prøve* lægges der vægt på eksaminandens beherskelse af det engelske sprog, forståelse af forlægget og færdighed i skriftlig fremstilling på engelsk. Der gives én karakter ud fra en helhedsvurdering af den samlede besvarelse.

Ved *den mundtlige prøve* lægges der vægt på at eksaminanden på flydende og korrekt engelsk kan præsentere, analysere, fortolke/vurdere og perspektivere det ukendte prøvemateriale og anvende den viden, der er opnået i arbejdet med det studerede emne.⁸

While this description emphasises formal aspects of the learners' competence as well as content knowledge, it arguably lacks an *explicitly* communicative aspect, such as I have already argued in my introduction. Thus, successful communication of inherently impositive speech acts depends on learners' pragmatic L2 knowledge: that they conform not only to grammatical but equally to pragmatic target language norms.

In connection with the extract of Bley-Vroman's scheme presented above, it was suggested that L2 learners may be content with less than target-language competence. As discussed in the following, it is, however, not easily determined just *how* competent in the L2 a learner should be.

3.4 Second language acquisition of pragmatic competence

In Chapter 2, I argued that with the aim of successful communication, pragmatic knowledge in a language is equally important as is knowledge of the language's grammar. Consequently, the acquisition of a second language goes much beyond the grammatical aspect. That is, in addition to phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics; learners should arguably possess knowledge of e.g. politeness routines in the second language. I comparatively argued that in addition to grammatical competence, speakers of a language should possess knowledge of target language norms of communication, and as argued by Brown and Levinson; though politeness routines are universal, the particular values may vary culturally.

Gumperz writes:

⁸ 'Bekendtgørelse om STX, Engelsk A, bilag 18', June 2010, <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=132647#B18>, (Accessed on 22.03.12)

Communicative competence can be defined in interactional terms as ‘the knowledge of linguistic and related communicative conventions that speakers must have to create and sustain conversational cooperation’, and thus involves both grammar and contextualization (Gumperz, 1982: 209).

Simensen (2007:137) adds that communicative competence in a language involves so much more than just linguistic knowledge and refers also to aspects such as facial expressions and sociocultural knowledge of politeness conventions. For this reason, Simensen argues that communicative competence in a language is primarily reserved for native speakers of that language. As for L2 learners, Simensen echoes Bley-Vroman (see above) stating that most should be content with less than complete *competence* and suggests they rather aim for the highest possible degree of communicative *abilities*. Arguably, however, learners should possess enough L2 knowledge as to choose the adequate communicative strategy required by a given context of situation and hearer. That said, within second language research, studies suggest that learners may opt for completely different communicative strategies from native speakers, and this may reflect learners’ insufficient L2 communicative competence. Learners may be proficient in grammar and vocabulary but lack knowledge of what is socially appropriate in L2 and/or the appropriate linguistic realisation patterns necessary for the performance. As the terms were introduced in Section 2.2, learners’ errors may be of either pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic character, and although the knowledge of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic L2 behaviour are not the only aspects involved in pragmatic competence (Ellis, 2008:192), main findings of research within L2 acquisition indicate that these aspects are important to learners’ proficiency in L2. According to general findings, learners seem to more easily overcome the former kind since the latter, which involves a need for acquisition of the sociocultural rules underlying performance of particular speech acts takes learners longer time. In fact, ‘Many learners may never do so’ (Ellis, 2008:190)

Although studies such as Matsumara (2003) suggest that there is not a direct connection between level of proficiency and the learners’ speech act strategies, second language research generally suggests that advanced L2 learners, who possess more lexical and grammatical knowledge than learners at lower levels, are more native like even if with over-verbosity tendencies (Matsumara 2003 in Ellis, 2008:190).

As further discussed in the following, studies indicate that, notwithstanding their grammatical competence, when performing in L2, even advanced learners may *transfer* L1 pragmatic norms into L2 performance. That said, the extent to which language transfer is dominant in L2 performance is not easily determined, and researchers far from agree.

3.5 Transfer in L2 acquisition

Within Second Language Acquisition, a great amount of research is devoted to the extent to which learner errors result from negative transfer from the learners' first language (*interference*) or alternatively stem from general processes of language development, i.e. similar tendencies used in acquisition of L2 as L1 (*intralingual processes*) (Ellis, 2008:355).

Resulting from transfer or intralingual processes, learners' cross-linguistic effects may result in the taxonomic terms, *avoidance* strategies and *over-use*. In effect, it is, however, difficult to determine *when* instances of learners' avoidance of difficult linguistic structures have taken place. Thus, avoidance refers to what is *not* performed, and consequently, Seliger notes that it can only be concluded insofar that the learner has demonstrated prior knowledge to the form in question. Additionally, there should be evidence that native speakers of the target language would use the form 'in the context under consideration' (Seliger, 1989 cited in Ellis, 2008:357). In his study examining apology strategies of Americans learning L2 Hebrew in Israel, Ohlstain found that the learners transferred direct strategies from L1 American English into L2 Hebrew and states that over-use may result from transfer at discourse level (Ohlstain 1983 cited in Ellis, 2008:358).

As understood in Second Language Acquisition, *language transfer* designates how second language learners sometimes draw on previously acquired linguistic knowledge. Whereas *positive transfer* designates facilities in learners' L2 acquisition resulting from L1 and L2 similarities (Ellis, 2008:354-55), *negative transfer* refers to how one language, typically the L1, interferes with the acquisition of L2, causing errors.

To an unspecified extent, it is inevitable that a learner's existing linguistic knowledge will influence his L2 acquisition, and consequently 'no theory of L2 use or acquisition can be complete without an account of L1 language transfer' (ibid.: 402). That said, researchers in

second language acquisition far from agree on the extent to which L1 transfer results in L2 errors (ibid.:355).

In Section 2.2, I introduced and established as usefully maintained the distinction between respectively speakers' *pragmalinguistic* and *sociopragmatic* competence in a language. Interestingly, lack of L2 sociopragmatic and/ or pragmalinguistic competence may be due to learners' negative transfer of L1 behaviour:

...pragmalinguistic transfer shall designate the process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to particular linguistic material in L1 influences learners' perception and production of form-function mappings in L2...sociopragmatic transfer then is operative when the social perceptions underlying language users' interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts. (Kasper,1992 cited in Bou Franch, 1998:8-9)

Previous studies on pragmatic transfer suggest that learners regularly perform speech acts such as requests, apologies and refusals in accordance with the sociolinguistic norms of their native language (Ellis (1994) in Bou Franch, 1998: 5). What is more, Kasper notes how learners, in spite of having been displayed to show sensitivity towards such contextual-external factors as interlocutors' familiarity and relative status in addition to contextual-internal factors such as degree of imposition continue to use sociolinguistic norms of their native language (Kasper, 1992 in Bou-Franch 1998: 5). Also Trosborg (1995) reports that learners' sociolinguistic competence is problematic, and with reference to studies such as Eisenstein-Bodman 1986, she notes that though they may be proficient in grammar and vocabulary, learners may lack sufficient sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence (Trosborg, 1995:133-34). More recently, with her study on Chinese learners' compliment performances in the target language, English, Ming-Chung Yu (2011) evaluated the role and impact of Chinese learners' L1 when presenting in L2 English. Yu found that there were great differences in the ways in which respectively the Chinese and American English native speakers performed this speech act. The Chinese native speakers who proved much less inclined to offer compliments than the English native speakers '...could often be seen to reflect native language (L1) communicative styles and the transfer of L1 socio-cultural strategies into L2 behaviour' (Yu, 2011:1127).

Overall, transfer is one of the major factors identified in second language research. The extent to which the learners' level of proficiency determines transfer is supported by deviating study results. Ellis writes that while studies such as Takahashi and Beebe (1987) report that the

more proficient the learner is, the more the more likely it is that transfer has taken place, others such as Maeshiba et al. (1996) suggest that the increase in learner proficiency is connected to positive rather than negative transfer (Ellis,2008:190). That said, Johansen (2008), whose study is further discussed in the following, found that negative L1 sociopragmatic transfer seem to prevail when Norwegian advanced level learners express gratitude in L2 English.

In general, studies on language transfer have focused on linguistic aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary grammar or transfer at discourse level.

As opposed to transfer found at other linguistic levels such as phonology or syntax, I expect that negative pragmatic transfer should be more difficult to determine, since a strategy which may be represented by a correct *form* is potentially used in an inadequate *context*. Thus, learners may produce utterances which are grammatically acceptable and thus not per definition ‘wrong’, but if these utterances constitute strategies inadequate to the communicative situation, the result may be misunderstandings and consequently miscommunication.

With my aim to investigate pragmatic strategies of advanced L2 learners and the potential impact of L1 negative pragmatic transfer, two previous second language studies are particularly relevant for comparison. Investigating occurrences of a particular speech act in performances by Scandinavian (respectively Danish and Norwegian) L2 learners of English, these studies arguably resemble the interests of the present. With this, I refer to the previously introduced studies by respectively Trosborg (1995) and Johansen (2008). As discussed in the following, these studies interestingly, and much to my surprise, present rather conflicting results on the role and impact of L1 transfer in L2 speech act production.

3.6 Transfer of L1 pragmatic competence: presenting conflicting findings

In her study on Norwegian learners’ expressions of gratitude in English, Johansen (2008) used a DCT inspired by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) with the aim to compare the communicative strategies employed by respectively the Norwegian learners and native speakers of English. With the purpose to find evidence for possible pragmatic transfer, Johansen let her Norwegian participants answer to DCT situations in Norwegian in addition to English (see Section 4.4.2). Johansen constructed each of her DCT situations with a

varying pattern of + /- of the four social parametres: *distance*, *power*, *rank of imposition* and *rights and obligation*, which, as presented in Section 2.6, were I also used in my survey.

On an overall basis, Johansen interestingly found indications of negative pragmatic L1 transfer from her Norwegian participants performing in L2 English. Advanced level students though they were, Johansen's participants did not fully conform to L2 pragmatic norms. Just like the present survey participants, Johansen's learners had received instruction in English since childhood and were additionally greatly exposed to the L2 outside the classroom, in Norway. They were therefore '...expected to be familiar with certain routinised expressions of gratitude in English', they nevertheless had '...several difficulties in knowing in which situations they were to use these strategies and mainly relied on their L1 competence' (Johansen, 2008:42). At the same time, Johansen notes that, based on their DCT answers, the learners did not seem to lack the necessary linguistic devices for expressions of gratitude they would have needed according to the situations (ibid.:128). Of particular interest to the present study, Johansen's results '...gave a clear indication of the distinction between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence' (ibid.:133).

According to her findings, Johansen suggests that Norwegian learners rely on L1 pragmatic competence leading to negative rather than positive transfer. This behaviour was evident in those of her discourse completion task situations in which English and Norwegian practices diverged (Johansen, 2008:115), and most pronounced in her 'Raise' situation. In this situation, respondents were asked to react to the Vice-President at their supposed workplace informing them that they are raised \$20 a week. Johansen's group of English speakers generally replied to this with strategies of explicit thanking as opposed to the Norwegian learners, who, in L1 Norwegian as well as L2 English answered with long structures and mostly with the use of 'surprise or uncertainty' (Johansen, 2008:81). In this particular situation discussed, the variables investigated were marked +P +D +R -RO, with which Johansen's findings interestingly contradict Brown and Levinson's indication that the degree of indirectness increases with the power of the hearer over the speaker (Johansen, 2008:83). According to their strategies respectively, in this situation, Johansen's Norwegian participants possibly considered the size of imposition of 'a raise based on their performance' as more important than the hearer's superiority, while the English participants supposedly found that the hearer's superiority was more important than the situational imposition, and were therefore reluctant to show too many emotions (Johansen, 2008:119).

In her study, Johansen found that while both the Norwegian and English respondents *did* change their form of gratitude expression according to the social parameters, they considered the social factors differently in addition to their perception of the hearer's 'face'. As e.g. illustrated by the 'Raise' situation, the Norwegians learners' long, emotional reactions of surprise or even disbelief may reflect differences in politeness systems, and Johansen cites Røkaas who suggests that this type of verbal humility tends to be valued in Norway (Røkaas 2000 cited in Johansen, 2008:118). Consequently, Johansen proposes that the possible difference in reactions from the respective Norwegian and English participants may result from cultural differences.

Johansen's DCT results then strongly suggest that even with advanced Norwegian learners of English, L1 pragmatic transfer may be dominant, and that learners' grammatical competence need not fit their pragmatic one (Johansen, 2008:115).

In her study, Trosborg (1995) performed a conversational analysis on Danish L2 learners' productions of requests to native speakers of English with the aim 'to analyse aspects of discourse competence in Danish learners of English in comparison with native speakers of English' (Trosborg, 1995:134). Trosborg writes:

This study bases its hypotheses on the findings of classroom research to the effect that pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects as well as discourse functions have generally been neglected in classroom interaction. It can therefore be anticipated that learners are lacking in sociolinguistic competence as well as discourse competence. (Trosborg, 1995:133)

Trosborg classifies requests as a 'highly face threatening act requiring initiative from the speaker, who imposes on the hearer with the risk of losing face on both parts' (Trosborg, 1995: 146).

For her purpose, Trosborg investigated the communicative strategies of learners at three different levels of proficiency, referred to as Group I, II and III respectively, in addition to a group of native Danish speakers and a control group of native English speakers. Whereas Trosborg's Group III of most advanced learners at university level (Trosborg, 1995:137-38) resemble Johansen's target group (Johansen 2008:125), it is for the present purpose

Trosborg's Group II of mainly Danish high school pupils, which is most relevant (see Section 4.4).

Similar to both Johansen's and the present study, Trosborg's study was inspired by Brown and Levinson's social parameters, which is evident from the adaption of the parameters *social distance* and *dominance*⁹. With the purpose to analyse conversations of learner-native speaker role-plays, Trosborg used the social variables to construct the following three role constellations:

(a) status unequals, non-intimates (authority figures/subordinates)	+dominance +social distance
(b) status equals, non-intimates (strangers)	- dominance +social distance
(c) status equals, intimates (friends or near acquaintances)	- dominance - social distance

To analyse the eventual request performances in a total of 120 conversations, Trosborg constructed the below presented scale of directness:

Request strategies (presented at levels of increasing directness)	
Situation: Speaker requests to borrow Hearer's car:	
Cat. I Indirect request	
Str. I Hints (mild)	I have to be at the airport in half an hour.
(strong)	My car has broken down.
	Will you be using your car tonight?
Cat. II Conventionally indirect (hearer-oriented conditions)	
Str. 2 Availability	Could you lend me your car?
Willingness	Would you lend me your car?
Permission	May I borrow your car?
Str. 3 Suggestory formulae	How about lending me your car?
Cat. III Conventionally indirect (speaker-based conditions)	

⁹ Equivalent to *power*, the term adopted from Brown and Levinson (1999) and used in the present thesis.

Str. 4 Wishes	I would like to borrow your car.
Str. 5 Desires/needs	I want/need to borrow your car.
Cat IV Direct requests	
Str. 6 Obligation	You must/have to lend me your car.
Str. 7 Performatives	
(hedged)	I would like to ask you to lend me your car.
(unhedged)	I ask/require you to lend me your car.
Str. 8 Imperatives	Lend me your car.
Elliptical phrases	Your car (please).

Table 3 *Trosborg's request strategies* (Trosborg, 1995:205)

With the use of the presented scale for analysis, Trosborg found that on the whole, learner requests were less well prepared and less well supported; they had less preparatory in addition to supportive reasons, and consequently they were less attractive to the requestees than those proposed by both groups of native speakers (Trosborg, 1995: 306). That said, 'A strong preference for Cat. II conventionally indirect request, in which the requester questions the requestee's willingness/ability to comply with his/her wishes, was observed in all groups of informants' (Trosborg, 1995:234). I find it worth noticing that it was Trosborg's high school learners who presented the highest number of these indirect strategies with 54.5% compared to Group I with 43.2 % and Group III with 50.9%.

According to Brown and Levinson (see Section 2.6), conventional indirectness is an adequate communicative solution in face-threatening situations, and Trosborg states the fact that all groups in addition to native speakers (English with 48.2% and Danish with 50.9%) favour conventionally indirect requests asking to the hearer's 'ability/willingness' is not surprising. Thus, this strategy allows the speaker to perform his speech act and at the same time express a 'high degree of politeness', (ibid.) which is highly appropriate in very impositive situations such as the performance of requests. Related studies which support speakers' preference for conventionally indirect strategies include House-Kasper (1981), who compared the requestive strategies of native speakers of respectively English and German and, similar to Trosborg, found that with a total of 40.9%, English speakers prefer to use such preparatory strategies (House-Kasper, 1981 in Trosborg, 1995:289).

With respect to the values of the study's analytically incorporated social variables, *distance* and *power*, Trosborg suggests that lower level L2 learners prefer to use strategies of *hints*

when interacting with authoritative figures and friends in contrast to situations with strangers (Trosborg, 1995: 279). Accordingly: 'Hints are therefore particularly useful in situations where there is a great risk of non-compliance, and where great tact is needed when interacting with a person of superior social standing...' (ibid.:277). Trosborg notes that because of the distransparency involved in hints, speakers do, however, not often employ these strategies of complete propositional opacity outside of contexts where the hearer due to intimacy, daily routine or other shared knowledge with speaker easily solves this potential situational disambiguation (ibid.:193).

In 'Interlanguage Requestive Hints', E. Weisman (1993) looked at whether the opacity inherent in hints is exploited by learners as a strategy of communication, and whether the impact of situational variations marks hint selection by learners as it does with native speakers. Stating that hint strategies and the frequency of these may vary between learners and native speakers of a language, Weisman (1993) refers to findings from e.g. the CCSARP study (see Section 4.1) indicating that native speakers' use of hints is usually low compared to direct strategies or conventionally indirect ones (Weisman, 1993: 126). Interestingly, this observation partly agrees with Trosborg's findings. Thus, Trosborg found that in addition to two out of three learner groups, also native speakers of both English and Danish preferred hints to direct requests (Trosborg, 1995:225). Weisman stresses that the inherently indirect strategy of hinting may be difficult for learners to handle since the sentence and utterance meaning do not correspond. Based on her own study findings, Weisman (1993), however, suggests that hint strategies do provide learners with a 'safe option' and the advantage not to have to attempt to conform to target language's conventionalised realisations. Weisman therefore suggests that the opacity inherent in hints is exploited by learners as the most efficient means when deniability is needed (Weisman, 1993: 135).

All in all, all groups combined, Trosborg found that the Danish university level learners came closest to English speaker norms. They did, however, not produce as many requests. Trosborg's L1 Danish group produced also fewer requests than the English group (Trosborg, 1995:223). Since, however, the L1 Danish group produced more requests than any of the learner groups, Trosborg concludes that pragmatic difficulties in producing these forms rather than transfer seem to prevail (ibid.:283).

Defining the speech act *request*, Ellis writes:

3. Requests are also subject to internal and external modification. Internal modification takes the form of downgraders, which are intended to mitigate the force of the act...External modification consists of moves that occur either before or after the head act (i.e. the act that actually performs the request)... (Ellis, 2008:172)

In addition to classification of their strategies, in her study Trosborg analysed participants' use of both external and internal speech act modification (see Section 4.6). Also in their use of modification such as lexical/phrasal *downgraders*, Trosborg found that pragmatic difficulties rather than transfer seemed to prevail.

In the previous chapter, I have discussed the role of pragmatics in learners' acquisition of a second language arguing that this linguistic field constitutes a crucial part of L2 knowledge. Agreeing with both Bley-Vroman/Ellis and Simensen that learners should be content with less than full native speaker competence, I, however, predict that with the aims and goals to achieve successful communication, learners should possess sufficient knowledge of L2 politeness routines as to opt for the adequate strategies required by a given context of situation.

Although presenting rather conflicting conclusions on the extent to which L1 pragmatic transfer is found in L2 learners' speech act productions, both the studies of Johansen (2008) and Trosborg (1995) indicate that even advanced Scandinavian learners of English are not fully L2 communicative competent. Having said that, Trosborg's findings suggest that L2 pragmatic competence increases with level of fluency. In Chapter 5, I present my general discussion of study findings and compare these to the findings of Trosborg and Johansen respectively.

Based on my theoretical background of Chapters 2 and 3, I address the following research questions:

1) What are the conventional ways of reminding someone in English and Danish respectively?

Adopting Trosborg's model for analysis (see Section 4.6), I, however, predict that since reminders *are* not requests, native speakers' conventionalised ways of reminding deviate from their requestive behaviour, in which case I will have to modify Trosborg's original model. Moreover, I am interested to see if the conventional ways of reminding in English resemble those in Danish.

2a) What are the communicative strategies chosen by Danish L2 learners performing reminders in English?

In Section 2.4 I classified reminding as a highly impositive speech act, inherently threatening to the hearer's negative face and consequently requiring face work in polite realisation. It is the overarching goal of this thesis to find and report how advanced Danish learners of English produce reminders in L2 English.

2b) Do the communicative strategies chosen by Danish learners of English differ from those chosen by English native speakers?

With the primary aim mentioned above, it is necessary to compare and contrast the learners' productions of reminders to those chosen by English native speakers. First of all, I therefore have to establish how the speech act of reminders is realised by native speakers. Since few or none of my participants have already been abroad living in an English-speaking country for a longer period of time (see Chapter 4), and since they only or predominantly use the English actively in communication with other L2 speakers, I predict that they have not (yet) acquired sufficient pragmatic competence to perform L2 reminders like L1 English speakers. This prediction is also based on previous studies, such as Trosborg (1995) and Johansen (2008), which suggest that Danish and Norwegian learners of English respectively do not fully conform to target language norms producing respectively requests and expressions of gratitude in L2 English (see Section 3.6).

The before mentioned studies, however, present rather different findings on the particularities of learners' speech act productions. In my study, I am interested to see if, like Trosborg's learners, my learner participants produce overall shorter and fewer speech acts than the English speakers or if they, in accordance with Johansen's findings, sometimes give longer and less explicit strategies than the native speakers.

In addition to choice of strategies, Trosborg's study emphasises the importance of adequate speech act modification (see Section 4.6), I therefore look at how advanced Danish learners of English use internal and external speech act modification compared to the native speakers. I compare my findings to Trosborg's.

Based on the studies mentioned above, I predict that even at advanced upper secondary school level, the speech act strategies and modification chosen by L2 learners may deviate from those chosen by English native speakers.

3) Do the Danish learners vary their communicative strategies in accordance with the social parameters of power, distance, rank of imposition, and rights and obligations?

Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that the three social variables power, distance and rank of imposition influence the choice of speech act realisation. Thomas adds a fourth variable of rights and obligations (see Section 2.6). I predict that although of universal nature, the particularities of these social parameters may differ culturally.

Despite their different conclusions about language transfer, Johansen and Trosborg both found that although learners were sensitive to the social parameters investigated, they valued some of these factors differently from the English native speakers.

I am interested to see if my results indicate that advanced Danish learners value *distance*, *power*, *rank of imposition* and *rights and obligation* differently from English native speakers. L1 transfer might not just be a surface transfer of particular strategies, but a transfer of the underlying values that influence the choice of such strategies.

4) If there are overall differences between the Danish learners' productions of reminders and the native speakers', could this be due to language transfer?

Trosborg (1995) and Johansen (2008) studies disagree on the extent to which pragmatic transfer impacts respectively Danish and Norwegian learners' strategies performing requests and expressions of gratitude in L2 English. Trosborg concluded that L1 transfer was not an important explanation, whereas Johansen found indications that Norwegian learners preferred politeness strategies that resembled the strategies they used in Norwegian. When previous studies have come to such different conclusions, it is important to investigate the matter further, and add new data that may throw light on the matter. I thus compare what my learners do in English to their Danish production in order to establish whether inappropriate choices of communicative strategies or modification may stem from L1 transfer.

4. Methodology

In the following chapter I present and account for my choice of method, namely a survey performed by means of a discourse completion task. I discuss some central pros and cons of this elicitative method, and argue the DCT is a useful instrument for the present purpose. I then describe the construction of the DCT used in this study, and comment on some challenges and obstacles I encountered in this process. Further, I present my participants with particular emphasis on the Danish L2 learners. The chapter's final part is devoted to the method for analysis of the DCT data which leads on to the results chapter (Chapter 5).

4.1 Choice of Method: Advantages with the Discourse Completion Task

'The point of doing research is surely to find out something more than what is readily apparent from everyday experience and common sense' (Sealey, 2010:62). Within English language research, frequently used methods include interviews and the collection of textual data. As for the latter, this may be divided into two subcategories referring either to studies with informants participating in an experiment survey or focus group or to the analysis of corpus based texts (Sealey, 2010). In second language research, it is in particular the collection of textual data of the first kind, more specifically the discourse completion task, which is commonly employed (Ellis, 2008: 164). The discourse completion task or the DCT is then a method for investigation and elicitation of speech act strategies, which consists of a questionnaire with briefly described situations designed for the particular study purpose (Billmyer and Varghese 2000:518). As a method for the investigation of second language learners' communicative abilities, the DCT allows the researcher to present participants with situations constructed for a specific communicative purpose. Doing so, he or she can investigate how participants (think they) would respond/react to the given situational context and audience. Originally adopted by Blum-Kulka in 1982, the DCT was further developed with the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project by Blum-Kulka and Ohlstein (1984). This extensive project, commonly abbreviated as the CCSARP study, used the DCT method with the aims and goals to compare communications of requests and apologies across languages and '...to establish the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers' realization patterns of requests and apologies relative to the *same* social constraints (individual, native versus non-native variability)' (Blum-Kulka and Ohlstein 1984: 197).

According to Blum-Kulka and Ohlstein the DCT is a controlled elicitation procedure needed for cross-cultural comparability of results (ibid: 198). Thus, constructing the DCT him/herself, the researcher controls all variables related to each particular speech situation investigated.

In this thesis, it has been suggested (see Section 2.6) that generally speakers change their communicative behaviour according to the situational social parameters of, in particular, social distance and power. In this respect, the DCT method has the advantage that it allows the researcher to invent and construct communicative situations according to the internal relations between the hearer and speaker such as *power*, *distance* in addition to the situation's *rank of imposition* and *rights and obligations*.

Besides being a controlled elicitive procedure, the DCT is arguably advantageous in that participants' answers are quickly conducted and easily compared statistically. This also makes it possible to investigate target groups under the 'same' conditions. What is more, the DCT offers its participants greater anonymity and less anxiety than contrasting methods of oral interviews (Einstein and Bodman, 1986 cited in Johansen, 2008: 51).

Consequent to its many advantages, the DCT is commonly employed within second language acquisition, on its own or combined with other methods, and I have adopted the method for the present purpose. That being said, when a method has advantages, it inevitably has certain disadvantages, and in the following chapter I present and comment on critique of the DCT, at the same time defending the method use for the present purpose.

4.2 Some Weaknesses with the Discourse Completion Task

As method for investigation of language in use, the DCT is commonly criticised for being imitational. Thus, rather than *natural* language in use, DCTs only allow for an imitation of this: a fictional and hypothetical response to a pre-constructed set of speech act situations. With the DCT as only research instrument, the researcher accepts that results only reflect the participants' *belief* of how they would have or wish to behave (Ellis, 2008: 164), which may or may not be identical to their real-life behaviour.

Ideally, speakers' production of speech acts is studied in the natural context in which they are produced. According to Manes and Wolfson, it is spontaneous speech gathered by ethnographic observation that construes the most authentic data in sociolinguistic research (Manes and Wolfson, 1981 in Billmyer, Varghese, 2000: 517), and according to Labov we

must look as closely and directly at everyday speech as possible (Labov, 1972: 201). Notwithstanding, Labov acknowledges the contribution of even elicitive, conventional linguistic research methods, stating that:

...the exploration of intuitive judgments, the study of literary texts, experimentation in the laboratory, and questionnaires on linguistic usage are all important and valuable modes of investigation. (ibid: 1972)

Although an ideal, Trosborg (1995:141) notes that in addition to excessive time consumption, the study of natural language produced by L2 learners may be highly problematic in that these learners seldom have the opportunity of operating within a real L2 environment (Trosborg, 1995: 141).

Naturalness is obviously no characteristic of questionnaires, still studies suggest that it is only one of many criteria for good data (Beebe and Cummings, 1996: 67). In 'Natural speech act data versus written questionnaire data: How data collection method affects speech act performance', Beebe and Cummings investigated refusals to volunteer at TESOL '85. These refusals were produced in respectively DCTs and spoken language (telephone conversations) and the researchers found that overall, the written answers (DCT) were more content-focused than the spoken ones (telephone conversations), which tended to repeat themselves (Beebe and Cummings, 1996: 75). Classified as only an imitation of natural speech, Beebe and Cummings, however, found that the DCT for example creates an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will likely occur in natural speech and that it helps us gain insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance (ibid.:80). Consequently, Beebe and Cummings conclude that there is support for the continued use of DCTs as an effective research tool, and that although it can never account for features of natural speech such as the length of responses and the emotional depth, it seems to give us a good idea of the stereotypical shape of the speech act (ibid.:81).

As method for second language research, questionnaires are often criticized for allowing subjects to *plan* communication. Filling in a DCT gives participants the obvious advantage of planning and reflecting, which they do not have to the same extent in everyday communication. Therefore: '...no written instrument gathering data in a controlled setting which affords respondents the benefit of time to plan can ever approximate the complexity, ambiguity, and ever-present unpredictability of live face-to-face interactions' (Billmyer and Varghese: 2000: 545). Thus, in face-to-face interaction, speakers and hearers have an obvious

advantage of contextually present features such as body language and tone of voice which are not replicable in written imitations like the DCT instrument. When investigating patterns of language, however, I agree with Cook that no method of research can take account of all contextual features potentially relevant in communication (Cook, 1990: 15). It is then the researcher's challenge to determine and assume exactly what contextual features to provide the participants in her particular survey with her particular aims and goals.

With the aim to investigate what in general may constitute sufficient contextual information in DCT situations, Billmyer and Varghese (2000) tested out two versions of the same basic DCT, modifying the original schema used for the CCSARP study questions of native speakers and non-native speakers' request strategies. The researchers interestingly found that the typical social variables *social distance*, *dominance* and *imposition* are not powerful enough on their own to elicit as full a response as is found in naturally occurring data (Billmyer and Varghese, 2000: 543). With their content-rich DCT version 2, Billmyer and Varghese found that both native and non-native participants produced responses which contained more external modification and overall length of request produced than their more content-poor version 1. External modification can support the communicative goal of the speaker, and therefore Billmyer and Varghese stress that if research does demand DCTs, then the scenarios presented to participants should include more contextual information than is typically the case. In addition to *social distance*, *dominance* and *imposition*, Billmyer and Varghese (2000) suggest the DCT situations should contain information such specific information of the setting and scene, the length of acquaintance between speaker and hearer and explicit information of the requestive goal.

Although commonly employed on its own, previous studies suggest that combinations of the DCT and other methods for research are fruitful. Thus, Schauer and Adolph combined data from a discourse completion task and a corpus of spontaneous speech in a study of expressions of gratitude (Schauer and Adolph (2006) in Sealey, 2010: 136-7). Whereas the DCT interactions were produced in a controlled environment, the corpus of spontaneous speech strongly contrasted this. Comparatively, Billmyer and Varghese (2000) state that until more reliable instruments are available, sociolinguistic research should take use of combinations such as Hudson et al. (1995) did when combining DCT, oral production and self-assessment instruments (Billmyer and Varghese, 2000: 544).

Though disagreeing on the extent to which the DCT instrument is adequate for the study of language learners, researchers commonly agree that the optimal solution is combinations of methods. Thus, where one instrument contains weaknesses, another adds up:

In the end we advocate the comparison of data collected by different data collection procedures, and we urge researchers of interlanguage and pragmatics to gather data through multiple approaches since each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses. (Beebe and Cummings, 1996: 81)

4.3 The DCT applied to the present thesis

In the previous sections, I have discussed pronounced pros and cons of the DCT method. With the aim to investigate L2 learners' communicative competence, I chose to collect my data by means of precisely a discourse completion task, which would enable me to invent and construct communicative situations according to the internal relations between the hearer and speaker such as *power*, *distance* in addition to the situation's *rank of imposition* and *rights and obligations*. The nature of the present thesis being pragmatics, it is arguably problematic to use written methodology such as DCTs, and, initially, I considered using alternative methods for research such as oral interviews as employed by Trosborg (see Section 3.6). However, it was mentioned that this method might cause more stress and nervousness among the participants, and based on my personal experience acquiring English in Denmark, I predicted that this might apply to the present learner participants, who are well aware that they are expected to produce and understand English at an advanced level. What is more, I predicted that reports on learners' oral productions of reminders would require patience and time which go beyond the scope of the present thesis.

Ideally, however, I should have liked to combine a written and an oral elicitive method to analyse the learners' strategies of communication, which I predict would have revealed greater patterns of tendencies and allowed me to conclude more general than is possible with only written methodology. Thus neither DCTs nor any one other instrument of investigation is optimal for second language research on its own, but within the limited scope of the present thesis I predicted that any combination of methodology would be too extensive and presumably have asked more questions than given answers.

Due to its controllable qualities held with restrictions of time and scope, the DCT therefore remains the present survey's only instrument of investigation.

4.4 DCT Construction

With the decision to perform my survey by means of a DCT, I initiated the process of constructing the particular questionnaire which came to involve several more or less radical changes and methodological considerations as discussed in the following.

With this thesis, it was an aim to investigate the extent to which certain social factors impact Danish L2 learners' communicative strategies. That is, the distribution of linguistic forms is almost totally directed by social factors (Fasold 1990 cited in Billmyer and Varghese, 2000: 522). Inspired by Brown and Levinson in addition to Thomas' suggest variables (see Section 2.6), I predicted my participants would change or modify their communicative behaviour according to the calculation of face threat of each individual DCT situation and the social variables social power, distance, *rank of imposition of speech act* and *rights and obligations*. In accordance with the principle of indirectness (ibid.), I expected my participants' answers would reflect that the social factors are determined relative to the given hearer but also the particular context of situation and that e.g. the act of reminding someone to bring back a sweater is nowhere near as impositive as the act of reminding someone to pay you back (respectively Situation 7 and 12, see Appendix 1 and 2).

In Section 3.6, I looked at the potential extent to which even advanced level learners may transfer strategies of communicative behaviour into L2 performance, and although predicting that all my participants, native as well as non-native speakers of English, would modify their strategies according to these social parametres, it was my equal assumption that the learners might transfer strategies of L1 norms of communication rather than adapt to L2 target norms.

In second language research, we can study either learners' production (i.e. speech or writing) or reception (i.e. reading or listening) of speech acts. In Section 2.3, I argued that the present survey focus is on the illocutionary aspect of the communicative act hence the learners' *production* rather than their *reception* of speech acts. Had the size of the present thesis, however, permitted, I should, have liked to complement my survey with the additional aspect of Danish learners' *perception* of English native speaker speech act productions.

With the present aim to elicit from the participants strategies of reminders, I found it was important that each of my DCT situations be presented in a very clear and concise manner, in particular since I wished to avoid misunderstandings of the speaker's relation to the given

hearer vertically as well as horizontally, in addition to the particular situational imposition and rights and obligations involved.

Inspired by the CCASRP project, I gave my participants a range (12) of incomplete dialogues each representing socially differentiated situations giving a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, the social distance between the interlocutors and their status relative to each other. The particularities of speaker-hearer constellation in each of the DCT situations¹⁰ were designed to display combinations of +/- of each of the four social parameters of interest. The variables *social distance* and *power* commonly referred to as if inseparable, the present purpose requires I maintain a distinction between them as relations of respectively *horizontal* and *vertical* nature. Inspired by Trosborg's study, the present survey situations emphasise this distinction with the constellation type in which the fictional hearer is a person of authority (i.e. + power) who has nevertheless no distance to speaker (i.e. – distance). Examples include my Situation 10 (see below), in which the participant is asked to present a reminding to a work related superior who is equally a good friend. Further stressing this aspect are the situations which contain the converse constellation of – power and + distance, such as Situation 6 in which the participant is asked to act before a friend's new neighbour (see below). As introduced in Section 3.6, I have adopted the social constellation types (a), (b) and (c) proposed by Trosborg. In addition, I have included a fourth constellation type of + dominance and - social distance, which I term: (d) *status unequals, intimates (friends or near acquaintances)*.

Ideally, I should have liked to present my participants with a DCT consisting of 16 situations accounting for all possible (-/+) patterns of the variables, *power*, *social distance*, *rank of imposition* and *rights and obligations*. I did, however, predict that this would have made the DCT too time consuming, thus possibly compromised the quality of participants' answers. As argued by Dörnyei and Csizér: '...most researchers agree that anything that is more than 4-6 pages long and requires more than half an hour to complete is likely to be considered too much of an imposition' (Dörnyei and Csizér 2012: 78). Taking this further, Sealey states that 'On a number of occasions, I have known projects fall through because: questionnaires were too long...' (Sealey, 2010:69). I agree and consequently decided to construct a DCT with

¹⁰ 24 in total, 12 in English and Danish respectively

‘only’ 12 of the total possible 16 +/- situations based on variability within the four social variables.

Eventually, the distribution of combinations of respectively *power*, *social distance*, *rank of imposition* and *rights and obligation* in the respective 12 situations turned out as follows:

1. (+ + + +)¹¹

You are at school during class of a new subject with a new teacher to whom you have recently submitted a paper. Yesterday, the teacher agreed to correct your paper first and give it back to you already today since you will be away for the rest of the week. However, when class is over, the teacher has not mentioned your paper, and he/she is about to leave the room when you say:

/

Du er netop begyndt på engelsk højniveau på gymnasiet, er i skole og har time med den nye lærer, du for nylig indleverede en opgave til. I går indvilligede læreren i at rette din opgave først og give dig den tilbage allerede i dag, da du rejser på en uges ferie fra i morgen. Da timen er slut, har læreren dog ikke henvendt sig til dig med opgaven, og skal til at gå ud af lokalet da du siger:

2. (- - + +)

You and a group of friends are in a café enjoying yourselves. Unfortunately, a good friend forgot to bring his/her wallet, and asks if you could lend him/her 8 dollars for a drink. By then, you remember he/she already owes you for two of last week’s school lunches in addition to three coffees. You do not mind lending him/her money, but at the same time you would like him/her to be aware he/she already owes you. You say:

/

Du har fået en gruppe gode venner gennem engelsk på højniveau, og I sidder på en bar og hygger jer. Desværre glemte en ven/veninde sin pung derhjemme, og han/hun spørger om han/hun kan låne 70 kroner af dig til en drink. I det samme kommer du i tanke om, at denne ven/veninde allerede skylder dig penge for to frokoster i kantinen i sidste uge samt for 3 kopper kaffe. Du har ikke noget imod at låne ham/hende penge men er samtidig interesseret i at vedkommende er klar over han/hun allerede skylder dig penge. Du siger:

3. (+ + + -)

It is Thursday, you are at work, and your boss is present. Last week she promised to change this week’s work schedule for the upcoming weekend to give you Saturday off to go to your

¹¹ For a detailed account of the DCT versions 1 and 2 distributed to the Danish participants respectively in addition to that given to the English participants, see Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

friend's surprise party. Nevertheless, the schedule still has not been changed. When your boss is about to leave, you say:

/

Det er torsdag, du er på dit arbejde, og din chef er til stede. Sidste uge lovede hun dig at ændre denne uges arbejdsplan sådan at du kan få lørdag fri for at kunne deltage i din bedstes surprise party. Arbejdsplanen er imidlertid ikke blevet ændret. Da din chef gør sig klar til at tage hjem, siger du:

4. (- + + -)

It is Saturday, and you are at the party of someone you do not know very well. You are talking to a nice stranger. In the midst of the conversation, the two of you discover you share a great interest in photography. Your new acquaintance suddenly remembers that he has a spare ticket for next weekend's long sold-out photo exhibition, and wants to know if you would be interested. You are very excited and cannot believe your luck since you yourself have been trying to get a ticket. Thankfully, you accept the offer, and give him your phone number, and he says he will call you soon. By Friday, you are getting really impatient having had no call from the party acquaintance. You are about to give up hope to go to the exhibition when you suddenly run into him in the street. You say:

/

Det er lørdag aften og du er til fest hos en, du ikke kender særlig godt og har indledt en samtale med en, du ikke før har talt med. Det viser sig at vedkommende deler din store interesse for fotokunst, og I taler meget sammen om dette resten af aftenen. Din nye bekendte kommer i tanker om at han/hun faktisk har en ekstra billet til åbningen af den kommende weekends store fotoudstilling, og disse billetter har været nærmest umulige at få fat på. Han/hun tilbyder dig billetten, og du takker begejstret ja. I aftaler at ringes ved, og du giver ham/hende dit nummer. Den følgende fredag har du intet hørt, og du er utålmodig og er ved at opgive håbet om udstillingen da du pludselig løber ind i ham/hende på gaden. Du siger:

5. (- - - -)

You and your friend are at your place chatting, relaxing and listening to music although the actual purpose of her/him visiting was that she/he help you with your mathematics assignment due the next day. After a while, your friend makes a comment that she/he had better leave soon as it is almost dinner time. You say:

/

Du og en ven sidder hjemme hos dig og slapper af, snakker og hører musik. Det var dog meningen, at hun/han skulle hjælpe dig med den matematikopgave, du skal aflevere næste dag. Efter noget tid siger din ven at hun/han må se at komme hjem da det snart er tid til aftensmad. Du siger:

6. (- + - -)

You are at the house of a friend's new neighbour. The neighbour is giving a housewarming party, and has invited the two of you although none of you know him from before. At the party, you get hungry, and make a discreet comment about this to your friend. Nevertheless, the neighbour overhears you comment and says he has some lasagne left over that he will gladly get you. You thank him. In spite of this offer, the neighbour chooses to sit down in the sofa with a beer. He remains there while almost half an hour goes by. By then, you are really hungry. Suddenly, the neighbour gets up from the couch and walks past you to get more beer from the fridge. When he passes by, you say:

/

Du er til housewarming hos en vens nye nabo. Ingen af jer kender denne nabo særlig godt, men synes det er hyggeligt til festen. Du er ret sulten, og bemærker diskret dette til din ven. Naboen overhører tilfældigvis din bemærkning, og siger at han har noget lasagne tilbage fra aftenmaden, som han gerne vil varme til dig. Du takker ja. På trods af sit tilbud sætter naboen sig til rette i sofaen med en øl. Han bliver siddende til han efter næsten en halv time rejser sig for at hente flere øl. På dette tidspunkt er du blevet rigtig sulten. Da han går forbi dig, siger du:

7. (- - + +)

Your friend, whom you met through work, borrowed a shirt from you two weeks ago. This weekend you are planning to wear the shirt at a party, for which reason you had asked her to bring it back to you by yesterday. However, she did not. Today, you are at work together again, and when you see her, you say:

/

En ven, du har mødt igennem arbejdet, lånte en trøje af dig for to uger siden. Du havde tænkt dig at have trøjen på til den kommende lørdags fest, så du bad hende/ham om at give dig den tilbage senest i går. Dette skete dog ikke. I dag er i begge på arbejde samtidig og da du ser hende/ham, siger du:

8. (+ + - -)

Yesterday in a new class, you asked your new teacher if you could leave 15 minutes early today to catch a bus that only runs every hour. He/she agreed. Today in class, there is only 20 minutes left when the teacher suddenly decides to divide the class into pairs to discuss a text. It seems he/she does not remember your agreement. When he/she passes by your table to hand you the text, you say:

/

Du er til time med en ny lærer på gymnasiet. I går bad du læreren om lov til at gå 15 minutter før timen slutter i dag da du gerne vil nå en bus som kun går en gang i timen. Dette fik du indvilget. Der er kun 20 minutter tilbage af timen da læreren begynder at inddele jer i par til arbejde med en tekst. Da læreren kommer forbi dit bord og skal til at give dig teksten, siger du:

9. (- + + +)

You have been out with a group of friends, and come home to discover you lost your phone. You try to call it and, luckily, someone answers. Relieved, you talk to the finder, who seems nice. Impatient to get back your phone, you ask her if you can come pick it up the next day. The finder agrees and gives you her address and phone number. She says she will get back to you the next morning with a time to meet up. Nevertheless, by the next evening there has been no news from the finder. You choose to dial her number, make the call and say:

/

Du har været i byen med nogle venner. Da du kommer hjem, opdager du din mobil er væk. Heldigvis er der en, der svarer da du ringer til den, og personen i den anden ende af røret virker venlig. Du er ret utålmodig for at få mobilen tilbage, så du spørger finderens om du kan komme og hente den allerede næste dag. Dette er helt fint med hende, som giver dig sit eget mobilnummer. Hun siger hun vender tilbage i løbet af næste formiddag for at I kan aftale et tidspunkt at mødes. Næste aften har finderens imidlertid ikke givet lyd fra sig. Du taster hendes mobilnummer, ringer op og siger:

10. (+ - + -)

At work, your superior, who is around your age, has already become a good friend. A couple of days ago, the two of you were having coffee at his/her place. Here, he/she agreed to cover your Friday's shift for you to participate in an excursion. Today, it is Thursday, the day before the excursion. You want to make sure he/she has not forgotten your agreement. When you see him/her, you say:

/

Du er blevet gode venner med din jævnaldrende overordnede på arbejdet. For nogle dage siden sad I hos hende/ham og drak kaffe. Hun/han tilbød da at tage din vagt på fredag hvor du gerne vil med på en tur til Tivoli. I dag er det torsdag, dagen før turen. Du håber at din ven/overordnede stadig husker jeres aftale. Da du ser hende/ham på arbejdet, siger du:

11. (+ - - -)

You are spending a couple of weeks during summer camping with your aunt and uncle. Today, it is Friday and you want to go out with some friends you met at the camping site. Usually, your aunt and uncle allow you to stay out until midnight am at the latest. Last night, however, your uncle gave you permission to stay out until 1 am, this time only. Before heading out, you want to make sure this agreement is still on. You say:

/

Du er under 18 år og på campingferie med din onkel og tante. I dag er det fredag, og du har mødt nogle andre unge på campingpladsen som du har lyst til at tage i byen med om aftenen. Normalt får du lov til at være ude til klokken 2 men din onkel har denne aften givet dig lov til at blive ude til klokken 3. Du vil gerne sikre dig at han husker jeres aftale. Lige før du går ud, siger du:

12. (+ - + +)

(L1 English version)

You are visiting your aunt and uncle who live in another state. You and your uncle are grocery-shopping in the local supermarket when your uncle realizes he forgot his wallet at home. Although short of money, you naturally lend him the 40 dollars for the food. Your uncle says he will pay you back once you get home. By the next evening, he nevertheless still has not paid you back, and you begin to worry he might have forgotten about it. You say:

/

(L2 English version)

You are attending a language course in the USA and are staying with a nice host family, and by now, you feel very comfortable with them. Yesterday, you and the father were in the local supermarket. Unfortunately, the father forgot to bring his wallet, so you lend him 40 dollars (approximately 200 DKK), which he said he would pay you back once you get home. By the next evening, he has nevertheless still not done so, and you begin to worry he might have forgotten about the money.

/

Du er på ferie med din onkel og tante i deres sommerhus. Du og din onkel er gået i supermarkedet, og han skal til at betale da han opdager at han har glemt sin pung derhjemme. Selvom du ikke har mange penge for tiden, låner du ham selvfølgelig pengene som er omkring 200 kroner. Din onkel lover at betale dig dem tilbage samme dag. Næste aften har

han imidlertid hverken givet dig pengene eller kommenteret sagen. Du begynder at tænke på, om han mon har glemt det. Du siger:

Common to all these constructions is the participant's active role: In this survey I have thus constantly required that my participants fulfill to role of the speaker. Inspired by Trosborg (1995), it was furthermore my conscious decision that the participants should not take any superordinate position before the hearer. That is, in each and all of the DCT situations participants were asked to answer to a fictional hearer situated either upwards in rank or of equal status to the speaker. Thus, it was my prediction that the impositive nature of reminders would not be fully exposed had I alternatively asked the participants to perform downwards in rank.

Based on the previous discussion of respectively advantages and disadvantages of the DCT method, I have aimed to make my constructed situations as close to real-life communicative settings as possible and attempted to add up for missing contextual features in the best possible way in order to avoid ambiguity of expressions. At the same time, it was stressed that the DCTs should not be too long or too complex.

With the intention to rule out such potential sources of error, I decided to test out my initial DCT questions on a smaller scale i.e. pilot group prior to performing the actual survey.

4.4.1 Testing the Method

With the inclusion of a pilot group, it was my intention to test the appropriateness of all DCT situations. Thus:

The results of the pilot study are invaluable in helping the researchers to (a) fine-tune the final version of the questionnaire; (b) improve the clarity of the items wordings and the instructions; (c) finalize the layout; (d) rehearse the administration procedures; (e) dry run the analysis to see whether the expected findings will potentially emerge from the data; (f) time the completion of the questionnaire; and (g) generally double-check that there are no mistakes left in the instrument. (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2012:79)

In addition to the factors mentioned by Dörnyei and Csizér, I hoped that piloting my DCT would eliminate the potential source of error that the DCT be too long, i.e. time- consuming, consequently risking too many 'opts outs' of the final questions. Thus: 'Enhanced material

does take more time to respond to and respondents may suffer fatigue if the questionnaire includes too many situations' (Billmyer and Varghese, 2000:545).

Dörnyei and Csizér argue that, ideally, researchers should choose pilot participants who resemble the target group of the design (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2012:79). For this reason, my pilot group came to consist of three men and four women who arguably share the following features with the target group:

- L1 Danish
- L2 English
- All seven had attended (and completed) upper secondary school within the past 3 years (the target group were in the final year of upper secondary school)
- Six out of the seven had completed the third year of English STX A-level, i.e. the education and L2 level of the target group

That the pilot group participants had all *already* completed upper secondary school is potentially a methodological problem in that their level of English might have differed from that of the target participants. Thus, at the time of the survey completion, five out of the seven participants were enrolled in university-level education. University level students though they were, it was, however, important that none were students of languages or linguistics, since I agree with Johansson (1979:197), that previous learning and conscious preoccupation with linguistic problems might affect participants' responses.

I then gave the task to the pilot group and asked them to complete it on similar terms to the eventual target participants (see Section 4.5.1). Although performed on a small scale, the pilot survey *did* prove useful, thus the feedback included several suggestions for improvement such as Situation 9 involving a speaker-hearer constellations of + distance, to which several participants complained that the situational description as too long or complex. Consequently, I changed to the original a number of times.

I found it highly useful that 3 of the 7 participants reported of uncertainties with respect to the *rank of imposition* in the situations involving money (2) and (12). Initially, it was not my intention that Situation 2 should contain information on the speaker's exact debt to the hearer. In effect, however, the pilot participants disagreed:

(*) 'For mig kommer det også an på hvor mange penge personen skylder mig...'

(*) 'Hvor mange penge?'

(*) 'Det afhænger helt af beløbet'

These reactions strongly indicate the predicted importance of the *rank of imposition* of a particular act to a speaker's communicative strategy is indeed important. I was, however, surprised to find *the extent* to which this mattered in the situations involving -social distance between speaker and hearer (i.e. Situation 2).

Billmyer and Varghese's findings (2000) suggest that DCT situations should include detailed contextual information. In my pilot survey, I, however, experienced that it may be difficult to determine exactly how much information is enough and not too much. Since my pilot group responses indicated that the original version of Situation 10 lacked contextual information on e.g. purpose of the stay in the US, I decided to elaborate on this situation and expand it significantly. In effect, the situation came to include what I initially thought might be too long a description of both the exact purpose of the stay in the US and the approximate age of the hearer and the speaker. As evident from the situation presented (see Section 4.4), I additionally upgraded the status of 'friend' to 'good friend' thereby specifying the horizontal distance between the speakers.

In sum, the present pilot survey proved very useful as the participants' responses helped to much improve the DCT quality and, above all, to clarify the social constellations involved in each situation.

4.4.2 Administering the DCT

With the aim to look at L1 impact on L2 strategies, I needed to be able to compare what my target participants, Danish learners would do in their L1 and in their L2. I also needed to compare them with native speakers. However, it would not be a good idea to give the learners the same questionnaire in both languages as I predict this might have caused some or more participants to direct transfer of responses in Danish to English (see Section 3.6). For this reason I decided to approach the matter differently: I divided the 29 learners into two groups giving each participant respectively a DCT version 1 or 2. The two versions were separate yet interrelated consisting each of a total 12 situations, first half of which were in English, the other half in Danish. In this way, the first group was asked to respond to the first part of the

English situations, whereas the second group was asked to answer to the corresponding part in Danish and vice versa with the second part of the situations. Thus, none of the participants was asked to respond to the ‘same’ situation twice (see Appendix 1).

The employment of this method was greatly inspired by Johansen (2008) who performed a survey on Norwegian L2 learners’ expressions of gratitude in English. Like Johansen (2008: 59), I predicted that letting all learner participants answer the same questions in Danish and English might lead to direct translations of responses and identical answers in Danish and English. Apart from a few necessary cultural moderations such as to currency and drinking habits, which I adjusted according to advice from a native speaker of American English representing the target control group (see Section 4.5.4), I kept the 12 DCT situations in respectively English and Danish as similar as possible. The L1 English participants against whose answers the Danish participants’ would be compared and contrasted were naturally asked to complete only the English version of the DCT.

Though it was never my aim to reveal to them the actual survey purpose (see Introduction), I needed to give my participants certain, brief instructions in writing prior to the actual DCT. In addition to information on survey anonymity, Johansen’s study inspired me to emphatically ask my participants not to pay attention to their grammar and spelling, which I would not be taking into account in my analysis. That is, with the aim to investigate communicative strategies of language learners, I established pragmatics as an independent linguistic discipline (see Chapter 2) and consequently I investigate pragmatic aspects only. For this reason I did not want the participants to waste time worrying about these aspects. Above all, I wanted to make sure that the participants did not waste completion time worrying about the ‘correctness’ of whatever reaction to the situations they might find right to them, even if this be opting-out of answering, and consequently I instructed them:

Jeg vil bede dig besvare de følgende spørgsmål så ærligt som muligt i forhold til hvordan DU selv ville agere i de enkelte situationer. Det er således også et fuldt ud gyldigt svar hvis du lader et svarfelt forblive blankt hvis du i en eller flere af de beskrevne situationer ikke ville have sagt noget¹²

In addition to the written instructions, both the L2 learners and the L1 English participants were instructed orally prior to the completion of the task. That said I was only personally present at the former group’s task completion where I distributed the task at the beginning of

¹² For a detailed account of the DCT instructions, see Appendix 1

a Friday afternoon's English class and asked them to hand it in when completed. Most of these participants took around 25 minutes to complete the task, and all were done before the end of the session. Thus, the vast majority completed without any signs of complications. In order to compare and contrast strategies employed, it was an overall aim that the two participant groups completed the DCT task on as similar grounds as possible. Not present myself, I instructed the teacher who administered and distributed the task to the American English participants over email.

In addition to these guide lines, a few introductory questions were added prior to the actual DCT situations as required by thesis' nature in second language acquisition. In accordance with my overarching aim, it was first and foremost necessary I asked the participants to confirm their L1 as Danish. Thus:

3. Er dansk dit modersmål?

Ja ☐

Nej ☐

Hvis ikke, hvad er så?

Since transfer may be directly linked to length of stay in L2 community (Bou Franch, 1998: 6), I moreover asked:

2. Har du opholdt dig i et engelsktalende land i længere tid (over 6. mdr. eller mere i træk)

Ja ☐

Nej ☐

I predicted that residing in an English speaking country for a longer period of time such as 6 months or more¹³ might impact the learners' overall level of English and consequently require I compare these respondents' strategies to the rest of the group. Based on their educational level at the time of survey completion and my personal experiences with Danish traditions to

¹³ I chose to list the 6 months limit as a direct result of own personal experience with staying abroad in an L2 speaking community; thus not until after approximately 6 months would I expect learners to have become 'profoundly' affected by cultural norms and habits.

travel only after completion of school, I predicted that only a few learner participants had yet been abroad living in an English speaking country for 6 months or longer.

In addition to these questions, the supposed impact of English on Denmark (see Chapter 3) required I also ask the learners a couple of questions to their own personal relationship with English. With these, I aimed to classify the primary L2 sources outside of a classroom setting and further see if Preisler's findings that Danes are much more passively exposed to than actively using English (Preisler, 1999: 30-34) also applied to my participants. I then asked them:

5. Hvor ofte ser/hører du engelsk udenfor skolen? (Såsom via internet, TV/film, reklamer, opslag på offentlige steder osv.)

Dagligt: _____
Flere gange om ugen: _____
Ugentligt: _____
Sjældnere: _____

6. Hvor ofte snakker/skriver du engelsk udenfor skolen?

Dagligt: _____
Flere gange om ugen: _____
Ugentligt: _____
Sjældnere: _____

7. Hvorfra får du hovedsagligt dine engelsk-input udenfor skolen?

(Sæt gerne flere kryds)

1) Internettet _____
2) TV/film _____
3) Bøger/blade _____
4) Reklamer/opslag på offentlige steder _____
5) Butikker/offentlige institutioner _____
6) Andre (specificer) _____

4.5 Participants

In the following section I present and account for the survey's target group participants in addition to the findings of the above presented questions.

4.5.1 Target Participants

According to Dörnyei and Csizér (2012:81) convenience sampling in research involves participants who possess certain key characteristics related to the purpose of the investigation. With my aim to investigate the pragmatic knowledge of third-year students of A-level English in Denmark, my participants not only possess certain qualifying characteristics but are themselves *implicit* in the survey purpose.

For this purpose, I got access to an English class of 29 pupils at my own former upper secondary school in Denmark. Though 29 constitutes a relatively small number of target participants and might be problematic in terms of generalizing to the wider populations i.e. all third-year A-level students in Denmark, these particular pupils hopefully share important characteristics with the target population in general. Thus: ‘...regular arrays of stylistic and social stratification emerge even when our individual cells contain as few as five speakers and we have no more than five or ten instances of the given variable for each speaker’ (Labov, 1972: 204).

Ideally, I acknowledge that the gender distribution of the 29 L2 participants should be equal, nevertheless turned out as follows:

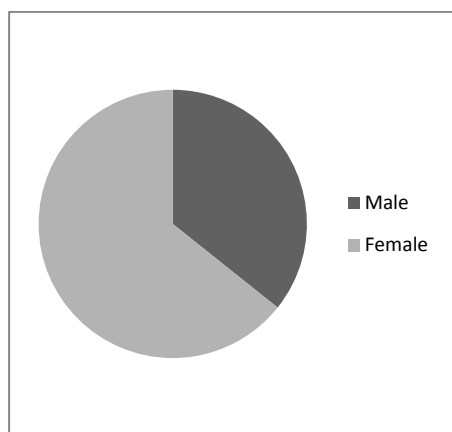


Figure 3 *Gender distribution*

Uneven though it is this distribution corresponds to the fact that it is (increasingly) more women than men who complete upper secondary school in Denmark. In 1983, 53% of Danes with an upper secondary school degree were women while the number reached 56% in 2003 (Jacobsen, 2004: 25). In the present thesis I look at L2 communicative strategies of learners of a certain *level* of fluency or competence rather than a certain gender. My findings moreover showed that although the male responses were sometimes shorter than those of the females,

there were no overall *patterns* of gender variation of strategies in addition to modification. As a result to these findings the issue of gender will not be commented further on.

The present target participants all attend a state school, Næstved Gymnasium and HF, situated in the south of Zealand. At this school they were enrolled to complete 'STX/studentereksamen' the same year as the survey completion¹⁴. The Danish Ministry of Children and Education defines the structure of STX: '§ 9 Uddannelsen organiseres i et grundforløb på ½ år og et efterfølgende studieretningsforløb på 2½ år, som vælges af hver enkelt elev ud fra de forløb, som skolen udbyder og opretter jvf. §14' (Undervisningsministeriet, 2010¹⁵). In 2009¹⁶, Næstved Gymnasium offered its pupils following 'studieretninger'/study programmes': *sproglig- humansitisk, interkulturel, samfundsvidenskabelig* and *naturvidenskabelig*¹⁷. At the time of the survey¹⁸, all 29 subjects attended the same class and were enrolled to take the 3rd year, final A-level English exam. As such the group equivalents the optimal target participants. At the same time, however, they derive from a mix of the above mentioned 'study programmes', with the common denominator that they did not take A-level English until this third and final year. Ideally, I should have liked to use Danish upper secondary learners of English having acquired at A-level all throughout upper secondary school, which was unfortunately not possible as I did not have access to such a group. All the same, in classroom settings pragmatics is presumably still a neglected area (see Section 3.3), thus it is doubtful that an alternative class of A-level learners would have made a significant difference in terms of eventual findings. Although not investigated here, I expect that should there be pronounced differences between the mentioned groups, this is instead to be seen in their grammar and written text production. For these reasons, the matter will not be commented further on.

Initiating this thesis, it was my overall belief and personal experience from several travels abroad that peoples' L1 may impact their L2 use. Consequently, I predicted target participants with an L1 different from Danish might use L1 strategies of communication in the L2 and asked all participants to this. It turned out to be as many as 7 out of the total 29 L2

¹⁴ Summer, 2012

¹⁵ 'Gymnasieloven (2010) kapitel 3: Uddannelsens organisering og indhold, §9, §11 and §12', <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=132542> (Accessed 05.03.12)

¹⁶ The year in which the participants enrolled in 3rd year

¹⁷ 'Studieretninger, Næstved Gymnasium STX (2009)', <http://www.naestved-gym.dk/Uddannelser/STX/FagOgStudieretninger/Studieretninger2009> (Accessed 05.03.2012)

participants who had a different L1 from Danish. These subjects then listed their L1s as respectively: Turkish (2), Chinese (1), and Arabic, from Iraq (1), 1 Arabic, from Lebanon (1), Spanish (1), and Kurdish (1).

In the upcoming discussion and analysis of survey results, I look at whether and how the DCT answers of these 7 participants contrast with the great majority of the group (22) with Danish L1. Insofar that the answers of the 7 as a whole do not point to any marked differences from the 22 with respect to communicative strategies employed, I will use all 29 participants as primary subjects since:

- All 29 A- level learners of English attend the third year of Danish upper secondary school, within an educational system in which A-level Danish is an obligatory subject taught from the first year¹⁹
- Danish being the only official language in Denmark, almost all subjects within the Danish state school system require a very advanced if not fluent level of Danish both written and orally
- All 29 participants live and function in a Danish society in which they, on a daily basis, are exposed to Danish culture and language (even if in addition to another culture and language)

Comparing and contrasting the 7 to the 22, I, should stress that since only 2 of the 7 share L1 (i.e. Arabic), it is in every way problematic to consider 7 individuals with 6 different L1's as constituting a unitary whole. It not within the scope of this thesis to investigate strategies of each of the particular 6 L1 languages mentioned so I will not suggest sources and/or go into details of above presented 6 L1s.

That said it was my prediction that insofar my results should indicate common tendencies separating the 7 from the 22, I would take that to be a result of L1 impact and consequently have to exclude these participants from the present survey. Thus, should that be the outcome I would have to comment on potential general tendencies with much caution.

As presented in Chapter 5, I eventually found no common tendencies in the 7 individuals' answers separating them from the total 22. Thus, apart from one particular individual with a different L1 from Danish, who presented some slightly more unfortunate grammatical structures than the rest of the learners (see Section 5.5), the remaining 6 performed no differently from the 22 with L1 Danish. The choice of strategies and modification used by the 7 participants in addition to their answers to the introductory questions on L2 exposure in

¹⁹ 'Gymnasieloven (2010)', <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=132542> (Accessed 22.03.12)

Denmark were overall similar to those of the native Danish speakers. For this reason, I included all 7 participants in my study. To proof that the 7 participants' pragmatic competence correspond that of the L1 Danish participants, however, a much larger survey involving many more both L1 Danish and non-Danish participants living in and taking active part in the L2 community is needed.

4.5.2 Second Language Findings

With the intention to classify the learners' overall exposure to the English language outside a classroom setting, I asked the L2 participants a few more questions prior to the actual DCT. Several of my questions to the learners' exposure to English were greatly inspired by Preisler's (1999) study. While Preisler investigate the general Danish population's perception of their own English competence or abilities in addition to overall relation to the position of English in Denmark in general (Preisler, 1999), I aim to look only at Danish L2 learners' actual communicative competence rather than their own evaluation or opinions. Studies point to how speakers' own perception of prestige or correctness in a given language is *not* an adequate source of information:

When asked which of several forms are characteristic of their own speech, their answers reflect the form which they believe has prestige or is "correct", rather than the form they actually use. (Labov, 1972: 213)

In his random sampling of the general Danish population²⁰, Preisler found that as many as 80% confirmed to *hear* English on a daily basis whereas only 35% confirmed to daily *see* English in writing. More pronounced, only 9% confirmed to speaking English on a daily basis (1999: 30-34). Inspired by Preisler's findings I predicted that also my survey participants would be more passively exposed to than actively taking use of English outside the classroom setting.

In the following, I present and discuss the result of the respective questions presented in the previous chapter:

²⁰ Based on Preisler's (1999) questionnaire responded by 865 Danes



Figure 4 Andre fremmedsprog?

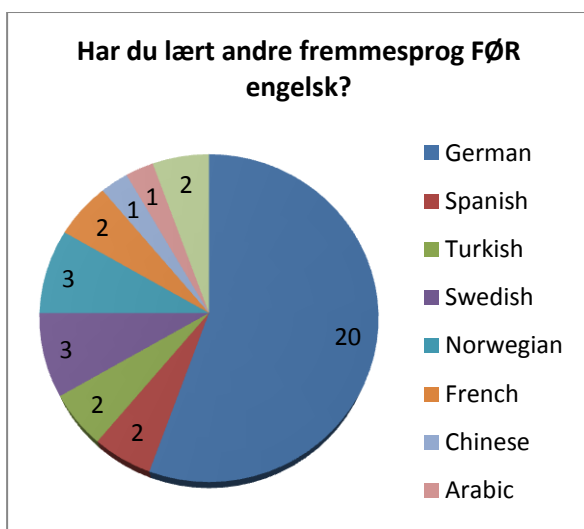


Figure 5 Andre fremmedsprog FØR engelsk ?

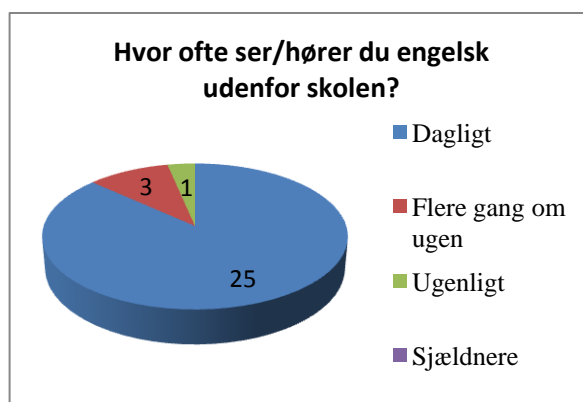


Figure 6 Hvor ofte ser/hører du engelsk?



Figure 7 Hvor ofte snakker/skriver du engelsk?



Figure 8 Hvorfra får du engelsk-input?

As illustrated above, as many as 27 of the total 29 L2 participants confirmed to master one or more second languages apart from English, most commonly and not surprisingly German, and only 2 participants claimed not to master any other second language.

It was my prediction that only a few of the total 29 had been abroad living in an English speaking country for 6 months or more. I was, however, surprised to find that not even a single participant confirmed to this. I then take this finding to strongly support the general picture; on a general basis, Danish youth go to stay abroad for a longer period of time only after completion of school. Consequently the potential impact of staying in the L2 community will not be investigated or commented further on here.

Preisler found that as many as 80 % of the 'general Danish population' hear English one to several times a day (1999:29). Roughly corresponding Preisler's findings, among my participant as many as 89% (25) confirmed that they see or hear English outside of school on an everyday basis. The above presented results confirm my initial hypothesis and agree with Preisler's findings that young people in Denmark are regularly exposed to English in a predominantly passive manner.

Interestingly, 17% (5) of my learner participants confirmed to use English on an everyday basis. With 59% (17), the major part, however, confirmed to actually use the English language 'several times a week' to 'weekly'. With this my findings deviate from Preisler's. Thus Preisler found that with a total of 82%, Danes younger than 25 years generally only actually actively used the English language English on only a monthly to yearly basis if ever (Preisler, 1999:36). That said, Preisler did find that these, his youngest informants, were among the overall most active English users: *m'Ikke overraskende er det overvejende yngre personer, personer med erhvervsarbejde og/eller relativt lang skoleuddannelse bag sig som bruger sproget aktivt' (ibid.:37).*

In Question 7 I asked the participants to list their 'main sources of English outside of school' to which, not surprisingly, everyone answered some type of media: as many as 97% (28) claimed to be exposed to English through TV/film and 90% (26) through internet use.

In conclusion, the above presented answers most unambiguously confirm my predictions regarding the position of English in Denmark and consequently this second language's

extensive impact on the youth outside of school. The status of English in Denmark (and probably in Scandinavia in general) continues to be a hotly debated topic, and while the present findings and indications confirm English' steady status, it, nevertheless, remains to be seen if this is reflected also in the learners' L2 pragmatic competence.

4.5.3 Determining the L2 Norm

Ellis writes:

In order to decide in what way the learner's performance differs from the native speaker's, it is necessary to determine what is normative in the latter... the difficulty is that speakers are likely to vary in this matter... (Ellis, 2008: 169)

For the present purpose, I chose to ask a group of L1 American English speakers to complete a DCT almost identical to the one provided the learner participants (see Appendix 1 and 2). It was my aim and intention that this L1 group should constitute the control group against whose answers the target participants' would be compared and contrasted. Having chosen this particular variety of L1 English is, however, not to undermine the fact that L1 English may refer to a wide range of varieties and dialects. Thus 'L1 English stands for people who have a variety of English as a first language, or mother tongue...' (Crystal, 2003: 61). Within the countries and regions in which English is spoken as a first language, there are an almost endless number of differences in both linguistics and culture. Grammatical wise, British English e.g. contrasts American English in terms of verb regularity, verbs used to express past time and modal verbs (Greadler, 2005: 32). In addition, differences in American and British culture and history are reflected in e.g. idioms and metaphorical expressions. American English is e.g. famous for many baseball-referring expressions such as *to play hardball*, *to strike out* and *to hit a home run* (ibid: 30-31). To speak of 'communicative strategies in English' (cf. overarching research question) is then, I reckon, a generalisation as the term *English language* could not, in any way, add up to all possible references of expressions. American English as my particular choice of L1 variety was, however, by no means random. As argued by Kasper (1992:225), the obvious solution to the problem of target language norms is to choose those norms found in whatever variety the learner is typically exposed to as the target. Already in his 1999 study did Preisler argue that directing oneself towards either British or American English in Denmark has become a symbol on certain social and cultural

values. In other words, a learner's choice of target language norm reflects his social and cultural lifestyle, which differs within the population as a whole: '...orientering mod **amerikansk-engelsk** er især karakteristisk for yngre personer som føler sig tiltrukket af anglo-amerikansk subkultur, og er derfor en indflydelse 'fra neden' (Preisler, 1999: 230).

As a consequence to the predicted impact of particularly American English on and in Denmark, I predicted this variety would constitute the *overall* target norm with Danish youth, in my thesis represented by the 29 learner participants. In the previous chapter, I presented results confirming that as many as 98% of the L2 participants were exposed to English through TV/film. Moreover, the Danish TV channels, DR and TV2 reported that respectively 66% and 75% of all films were of American origin²¹. To confirm that American rather than e.g. British or Australian English constitute the target language norm of each and all of my 29 participants would thus require a more extensive survey than is the present and i.e. call for additional questions reflecting areas of learner self-evaluation which go beyond the scope of the present thesis. In a more extensive survey, it would, however, be interesting to present Danish L2 learners with a questionnaire designed to elicit self-evaluative information as to indicate which variety of English they regard as normative in addition to questions on their perception of the various English varieties. I predict that such a complementary study would have been interesting to compare to Preisler's findings that, in general, the Danish population consider British English as more cultivated and representing spiritual values than American English (1999: 92-94).

In conclusion, I predict that it is in particular American English which affects the younger part of the Danish population who are passively exposed to this variety from early on, and very likely from much before they begin instructed teaching of English²² in a classroom setting.

4.5.4 The American English Participants

The present survey's L1 American English participants function as to control and compare the L2 learners' performances. Of secondary interest to the thesis' purpose, it is, however, required that I comment on a few aspects with the participants which I predict, however slightly, may have an impact on the survey results.

²¹ '70 procent amerikanske film på dansk TV' (2008), <http://tv2tid.tv2.dk/nytomtv/article.php?id=19128690.html> (Accessed on 17.08.11)

While the Danish participants attend a Danish state school, the L1 American English participants were at the time of survey completion²³ enrolled in the 4th and final year of an independent high school situated in Seattle, Washington, in which the tuition and financial aid of the particular high school in the year 2010-2011 ranged from \$19,315 to \$27,760. In addition to the financial aspect, the two schools participating differ with respect to classroom organisation. Thus, whereas the Danish educational system allows for as many as 28 pupils in each class, the independent American high school offers its pupils small classes.

As with the Danish participants, I should ideally have liked an equal gender distribution among the 21 American participants also. However, since only 9 of the total 21 participants were male this aim was not complied. I was, however, informed that such an uneven gender distribution is representative rather than exceptional with high school senior classes. For this reason the matter will not be commented further.

Notwithstanding the above exceptions, the particular American English participants constitute a relevant control group for the following main reasons:

- 1) Dialect wise, West Coast American English spoken in California, Oregon and Washington (i.e. Seattle) is said to be the closest to standard American English.
- 2) Based on my theoretical background (Chapter 3) outlining the current effect of American English on Denmark and my survey findings that the target participants almost uniformly confirm to regular English exposure from TV/film in which a total of 70% is produced in America (read: Los Angeles, Hollywood), I expect the participants are particularly affected by West Coast American English.
- 3) The particular participants attend the final year of high school corresponding to the target participants' final year of upper secondary school

4.5.5 Classifying the study

As now described and accounted for, the present study is primarily, though not exclusively, a qualitative one, thus the focus of attention is on the 'qualities' (Sealey, 2010: 17) of participants' answers.

²³ i.e. time of survey March 2012

4.6 Method for analysis of DCT answers

In order to analyse Danish learners' productions of reminders in L2 English, I modified the scale of increasing directness originally designed by Trosborg in her investigation of requests (see Section 3.6). Trosborg suggests that her proposed scale of increasing directness acknowledges that the speech act of requests is a threatening act demanding face-work for its polite realisation, and builds on the theories of Austin and Searle and first and foremost Brown and Levinson's *off*-to *on-record* strategies (Trosborg, 1995: 204-05). In Brown and Levinson terminology, the scale of possible strategies ranges from 'on-record' pragmatically transparent ways of performing the act to 'off-record' pragmatically opaque ways of acting (*ibid.*). The proposed framework obviously does not verify the speaker's *intention*, which is never transparent from the locution itself. For the present purpose, however, I agree with Trosborg's approach to requests, and I classify an utterance as having the intention of reminding the hearer of something if this interpretation is likely within the given context set (*ibid.*:220).

In Section 2.4 I argued that, in several respects, reminders are very similar to requests. Based on these resemblances, it was my prediction that the strategies of reminders would also fit Trosborg's model for analysis. However, reminders and requests are not *identical* speech acts. For example reminders *always* refer back to a cooperative act between the speaker and hearer situated prior to the actual reminding speech act. Consequently, I predicted that some of Trosborg's particular strategies for requests would have to be modified. What is more, the nature of my survey being mainly qualitative, I predicted that some responses might not fit neatly into the categories, in which case I would have to adjust the original model for analysis. This part of my work would also add important knowledge in that it would establish differences between the realization of requests and reminders. My native-speaker English and Danish data will thus bring important insight into the ways that the little-studied act of reminding are normally realised in both languages.

In Chapter 5, I present my survey results and in agreement with these my eventual complete model for analysis of DCT answers, from which it is evident that, with the nature of my participants' reminding strategies, I was allowed keep the basics from Trosborg's original scheme. As predicted, I, however, had to make certain changes, in particular with respect to

subcategorical divisions (see Section 5.1). Inspired by Trosborg's scheme, the main categories included in my 'model for analysis' are:

- 0. Opt out**
- 1. Indirect**
- 2. Conventionally Indirect**
- 3. Direct**

Figure 9 *Main reminders categories*

First and foremost, my Category 0, 'opt-out', is not found in Trosborg's original model. Thus, even though Trosborg builds on Brown and Levinson, she has not included the opt-out category. In all of my three informant groups, many participant answers were classified as 'opting-out of performance', and for this reason it was necessary I included this as an actual category. In addition to regular opt-outs, this category includes also answers explaining opt-outs in addition to answers which were possibly intended as hints, nevertheless considered too weak (see Section 5.1/5.2). Moreover, according to my findings (ibid.) it was in particular the total distribution of opt-out answers which, interestingly, might give indications of differences in the communicative strategies of the different groups and suggest patterns of transfer.

Analysing reminders, I maintain Searle's distinction between *direct* and *indirect* speech acts presented in Section 2.3, and I classify those utterances which contain a transparent relationship between form and function *direct reminders* and those in which the illocutionary force is *not* derivable from the surface structure as *indirect reminders*. While these polarised classifications are arguably straightforwardly established, the in-between speech acts are more problematically classified. Since they are not identical speech acts, I expect that the ways in which 'conventionally indirect requests' are expressed in English and Danish respectively may not be the same for reminders. Further complicating the matter, as opposed to requests reminders is a non-commonly studied speech act thus what constitutes 'conventionally indirect reminders' in English and Danish respectively, is not easily determined.

With the main categories established, the native speaker reminders proved that *my* model for analysis required subcategories different from Trosborg's, thus proved my prediction that the conventionalised ways of performing reminders deviated from those found with requests.

In Chapter 5, I discuss my survey findings and illustrate with examples these sub categorical extensions to my above presented main categories. I moreover identify some problematic cases of reminders which were not easily classified, the nature of which may be subject for debate.

When analysing communicative acts, I agree with Trosborg (1995) that it is not only the isolated strategy which must be considered but also the way in which the strategy is used. Thus, the speaker should know and use adequate syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders in addition to ‘persuasive’ external devices: ‘A request has been defined as an act which the speaker imposes on the hearer. It is, therefore, important that the request appears *plausible* and *justifiable* to the person who is to perform it (Trosborg, 1995:215). In Brown and Levinson terminology these devices are known as positive and negative politeness (see Section 2.6). To be able to compare more easily with Trosborg’s findings, I use Trosborg’s terminology more often than politeness theoretical terminology. However, I ask the reader to keep the similarities in mind.

In Trosborg’s terminology, internal modification may refer to both syntactic and/or lexical/phrasal modification; Trosborg lists the following means of possible syntactic modification of requests: the formation of *questions* rather than statements, *past tense/negation*, *tag questions*, *conditional clauses*, *embeddings*, *ing-forms* and the use of *modals*. Further, she lists the lexical/phrasal modifiers *politeness markers*, *consultative devices*, *downtoners*, *understatements*, *hedges*, *hesitators* and *interpersonal markers* (Trosborg, 1995:209-214). In addition to internal modification, the impositive act of requesting requires that the speaker make the request appear both plausible and justifiable to the hearer, for which reason sufficient external supportive moves are important (ibid.: 215-216). This kind of modification may refer to *preparators* including preparation of the content and/or the speech act in addition to checking on the hearer’s availability and/or getting his pre-commitment. In addition to this, the speaker may soften the hearer’s attitude using *disarmers* such as ‘I hate bothering you but...’ and *sweeteners*, the function of which is to flatter the hearer, while *supportive reasons* provides the hearer with an explanation or justification of the request. Additionally, *cost minimizing* has the purpose to make the hearer’s costs as few and little as possible. Finally, the speaker may downtone the speech act’s requestive impact with *the promise of a reward* (Trosborg, 1995: 215-219).

5. Presentation of survey results and discussion of the findings

In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings from my DCT survey. In Sections 5.1 and 5.2, I look at native English and Danish speakers' communicative strategies when performing *reminders* in L2 English and compare them to those employed by Danish advanced learners of English. In addition to investigating the respective groups' strategies employed in each particular situation including the social variables involved (Section 5.3) I present and discuss the participants' use of speech act modifications (5.4). In Section 5.5, I sum up the findings, and discuss the potential role and impact of L1 transfer in the learners' answers. I finally consider the extent to which advanced Danish learners of English have sufficient L2 pragmatic competence to successfully perform the speech act reminding in English.

In Section 4.4.2, I explained my DCT administration, arguing that the same Danish informants needed to respond to 6 situations in L2 English and 6 in L1 Danish. For ease of reference, the learners' answers in Danish are referred to as answers from 'the Danish group /the Danish speakers' and their answers in L2 English as answers from 'the learner group'. These are compared to the American English participants, labeled 'the Am. English group/the English speakers'. Reading the chapter, I wish the reader to keep in mind that, although apparently speaking of three separate groups, we are, in fact, only dealing with two, one of which is performing in two different languages.

5.1 Establishing the categories for the performance of reminders in English and Danish

Since reminders have not been studied and classified in detail, I started with a qualitative analysis of the native speaker data. I first had to decide on criteria for the classification of the responses into the four broad categories opt-outs, indirect reminders (hints), conventionally indirect reminders and direct reminders (see Section 4.6). The clearest cases of opt-outs were when the informant had just left a blank. However, sometimes informants had written an explanation for why they would not have said anything in a given situation. This was observed in e.g. Situation 6, which required the speaker to remind a friend's new neighbour of a promise of leftover lasagne:

Tror ikke jeg kunne sige noget. Ville være for pinligt. (Danish participant)

'Nothing. I would already feel rude about receiving food from a stranger, and to go and beg him for it?' (American English participant)

Thus I classified those answers as hints in which the reminding intention was only *implied* and therefore cancellable. In my 12 DCT situations combined, hints accounted for 11% and 19% of the total English and Danish answers respectively.

In addition to these, there were also several problematic cases of answers probably intended to serve as hints, but which were nevertheless too vague and consequently classified as opt-outs. In agreement with Trosborg's classification of requests, I classified as hints only those utterances in which the interpretation of a reminding was considered likely within the given situational context. This was a problem with a few of the Danish answers but did hardly concern the Am. English group's answers.

Though not numerous, these problematic cases require some commenting. They are all presented below.

'Ja, men der kommer snart renter på' (Danish participant in Situation 2 'Reminding friend of debt')

'Det er i orden, vi var produktive i dag' (Danish participant in Situation 5 'Reminding friend to help with homework')

'Øv nu fik vi ikke lavet mat. Men vi ses bare' (Danish participant in Situation 5 'Reminding friend to help with homework')

'Det er også ved at blive sent' (Danish participant in Situation 6 'Reminding friend's neighbour of promised lasagne')

'Hva så? Hva skal du lave i weekenden?' (Danish participant Situation 10 'Reminding superior of agreement to cover shift')

It is difficult to say whether these utterances could be interpreted as hints without additional contextual information than is present. Based on their vagueness of expression, however, it is my estimation that they would not be strong enough to count as hints, and they were therefore classified as opt-outs.

Few as they are, it is doubtful that an alternative reclassification of these answers would change my overall numbers greatly.

Those answers in which the relationship between the locution and illocution was transparent were classified as direct reminders. The nature of my participants' answers allowed me to maintain Trosborg's subcategory of direct *performatives*. In Section 2.3, I discussed Austin's theory of speech acts including his classification of performatives with the characteristic verb in first person, declarative, indicative, active and simple present tense. Austin himself eventually modified this original proposal, and for the present purpose I classified as performatives also those answers which contained a modified version of the performative verb; such as 'I'm sorry to **remind** you but you seem to have forgotten about my paper?' (Am. English participant in Situation 1) and 'Hva' sker der for at jeg skal **minde** dig om at medbringe den trøje som du skulle give mig tilbage?' (Danish participant in Situation 7). Arguably, these verbs designate the reminding illocutionary force in an explicit manner even though they are not in the simple present tense.

With the nature of my participants' answers, it was, however, necessary to include also other subcategories for direct reminders than what Trosborg used in her analysis of requests. With 11% (English) and 15% (Danish) of all responses, the major part of the direct strategies used was utterances with different forms of the verbs *remember/huske* or *forget/glemme*:

'Okay, but don't forget the money you owe me from last week' (Am. English participant in Situation 2)

'Du husker vores aftale i morgen, ik?' (Danish participant in Situation 10)

These cannot but be seen as explicitly referring to the agreement or debt in question. Moreover, a pronounced number my participants' answers were either questions or statements about the agreement/debt, and were also classified as explicit reminders:

'Jeg bliver nødt til at gå snart. Du havde jo givet mig lov til at gå tidligere i dag.' (Danish participant in Situation 8)

'I thought you were going to help me with the paper like you said?' (Am. English participant in Situation 5)

Being of nature completely transparent, the performatives in addition to the utterances that were questions or statements about the agreement/debt- were ranked as the most direct reminders observed, thus considered the most 'on-record' strategies.

As many as 29% and 24% of the English and Danish answers respectively fell somewhere in between the very indirect and the direct reminders. They did not mention the agreement/debt explicitly or use a verb related to the speech act (remind, remember, forget), but neither did it seem very likely that the speakers could have denied that they had actually reminded the hearer of something. –These utterances were thus classified as conventionally indirect.

In Section 2.4, I predicted that due to their similarity in nature, reminders would often build on the related speech act requests. As predicted, reiteration of the original request was commonly used to remind the hearer:

‘Could you send my phone to my address?’ (Am. English participant in Situation 9)

Just like original requests, these could be divided into conventionalised expressions relating to willingness, ability or permission. Since they build on requests, these conventionalized expressions are somehow doubly indirect.

Reminders being an infrequently studied speech act (see Section 2.4), it was a challenging task to define what constitutes conventional reminders in English and Danish respectively. The present classification of requests as conventionally indirect reminders might thus be controversial. None the less, reminders are by nature parasitic on requests, as they are ways of making sure that an original request or agreement is followed through. Since it is difficult for the speaker to wriggle out of an actual repetition of the original request, the conventionally indirect reiterations may be less ‘face threatening’. My findings indicate that English and Danish speakers generally use the same strategies when performing reminders. However, there was one version type of conventionally indirect reminders that was observed among the Danish participants, but not among the Am. English participants. The Danish answers included utterances such as:

‘Kunne jeg få min trøje tilbage?’ (Danish participant in Situation 7)

‘Ku’ jeg få lidt af den der lasagne?’ (Danish participant in Situation 6).

In these utterances, the past tense modal is used to refer indirectly to a previous agreement, and would correspond to something like ‘was it the case that I could have my shirt back’ and ‘was it the case that I could have some of that lasagne’ in English, thus functioning as requests as well as reminders. As such, it is not just a syntactic downgrading device otherwise found in e.g. *‘Excuse me teacher, but **could** you let me know if you have corrected my paper yet?’* (Am. English participant in Situation 1), where the remote modal is more tentative than a direct one (*can*) would have been. Because of the nature of these Danish answers, I included the conventionally indirect subcategory of ‘past tense modal’ reminders, commonly used in the Danish language.

Below, I sum up the strategies found in the data and give representative examples:

Category 0: Opt-outs

‘Ingenting. Jeg spiser og bor hos dem, desuden er han min onkel...’ (Danish participant in Situation 12)

‘...realistically, I would not have made that agreement’ (Am. English participant in Situation 8)

This category furthermore counted the discussed cases where the utterance the student had recorded was so vague that I also classified it as an opt-out:

‘Det er også ved at blive sent’ (Danish participant in Situation 6)

Category I: Indirect reminders

Str. 1: Hints

‘Hej, jeg glæder mig til forestillingen’ (Danish participant in Situation 4)

‘It would be nice to get my paper back’ (Am. English participant in Situation 1)

Category II: Conventionally indirect reminders

Str. 2: Reiteration of the original request

(Ability)

'Undskyld jeg forstyrrer, men kan vi finde en tid at mødes?' (Danish participant in Situation 9)

(Willingness)

'Will you remember to pay me back everything?' (Am. English participant in Situation 2)

(Permission)

'Excuse me, can I get my paper back? I'm not going to be here the rest of the week and I need it today.' (Am. English participant in Situation 1)

(past tense modals)

'Hvaaa...skulle vi ikke ha noget lasagne?' (Danish participant in Situation 6)

Str. 3 Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed

'Hey, have you corrected my paper? I noticed you didn't mention it and I wanted to check with you.' (Am. English participant in Situation 1)

Str. 4 Needs/wishes/desires

'Im going to have to leave in 5 min so should I just start the assignment on my own and leave when I have to?' (Am. English participant in Situation 8)

Category III Direct reminders

Str. 5 Performatives

'I just want to remind you that I am leaving to catch my bus in 5 min.' (Am. English participant in Situation 8)

Str. 6 Utterances with 'remember', 'forget' etc.

'Hi Uncle, I am is still my curfew, right? You promised, remember?' (Am. English participant in Situation 11)

Str. 7 Questions about the agreement/debt

'Is it still okay if I leave in 5 min?' (Am. English participant in Situation 8)

Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt

'Jeg skal gå snart for at nå min bus, det fik jeg lov til i går' (Danish participant in Situation 8)

The total 12 DCT situations combined, the major part of the reminders were clearly of indirect rather than direct nature and thus exhibited '...a mismatch between the expressed meaning and the implied meaning' (Thomas, 1995:119). This supports the claim that speakers tend to opt for indirect communicative strategies as part of everyday talk (see Section 2.6). The nature of these answers moreover indicates that both in English and Danish, reminders are of inherently impositive nature and require a 'greater degree of indirectness' (see Section 2.6).

It is interesting that some answers contained what at first sight appeared to be two rather than only one speech act:

'Do you have my shirt? **I really need it**' (Learner participant in Situation 7)

'Du må godt låne pengene, men jeg vil snart have dem igen. **Jeg har nemlig brug for dem**' (Danish participant in Situation 2)

'Can you help me with my math? Sorry we lost track of time. **You can have dinner here if you want**' (Am. English participant in Situation 5)

This naturally meant it was more difficult to establish such answers in one category, and their nature may be subject for discussion. In most cases, however, rather than seeing it as constituting an independent speech act, I classified the apparent 'second speech act' as modification of the first (i.e. generating positive or negative politeness). Just like when performing requests (Trosborg, 1995: 209), a speaker performing reminders may find it useful to employ internal and/or external modification to tone down the impact and/ or persuade the hearer to comply with the act desired. Thus, in both the first and second example above, the speaker uses a *supportive movement* which helps 'persuade' the hearer of the act desired, and in the third example, the speaker makes the desire act more attractive with the promise of a reward (dinner).

The particularities and need for analysis of what Trosborg calls respectively internal and external speech act modification was introduced in Section 4.6 and in Section 5.4 I discuss my participants' use of speech act modification.

5.2 Communicative strategies in performing reminders: some overall findings

Based on the qualitative analysis in 5.1, I decided on the model for analysis presented in Table 4 below. In this section, I present my participants' distribution of answers before commenting on some general tendencies in the data. Each situation will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.

Inspired by Trosborg (see Section 3.6), my model for analysis here illustrates the strategies with responses to Situation 1 from my DCT where S (pupil) is required to remind H (new teacher) to return S's essay

REMINDING strategies	
(presented at levels of increasing directness)	
Cat. 0 No performance of FTA ('opting out')	
Cat. I Indirect reminders ('off-record' strategies)	
Str. 1 Hints	'I hope I did well on my paper'
Cat. II Conventionally indirect reminders ('on-record with redress')	
Str. 2 Reiteration of the original request / request for what had already been agreed	
Ability/Availability	'Can/Could you give me my essay back?'
Willingness	'Will you give me my essay back?'
Permission	'Can I have my essay back?'
Past tense modals	'Kunne du ik' lige hjælpe mig med opgaven?' ²⁴
Str. 3 Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	
	'Did you get a chance to look at my paper?'
Str. 4 Needs/wishes/desires	'I need/would like/want my paper back'
Category III Direct reminders	
Str. 5 Performatives	'I'm sorry to remind you but you seem to have forgotten my paper'
Str.6 Utterances with 'remember', 'forget' etc.	
	'You forgot to correct my paper as promised.'/'Remember to give me back my essay'
Str. 7 Questions to the agreement/debt	'Didn't we agree that I would get my essay back today?'
Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt	'We agreed that you would correct my paper first'

Table 4: *Model for analysis of reminding strategies*

²⁴ Not observed with L1 English speakers, the example is given in Danish

	Learners	English	Danish
Category 0 Opt-outs	19%	11%	21%
Category I Indirect reminders			
Str. 1 Hints	16%	11%	19%
Category II Conventionally indirect			
Str. 2 Reiteration of the original request / request for what had already been agreed ²⁵	20%	29%	24%
Ability/Availability			
Willingness			
Permission			
Past tense modals			
Str. 3 Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	14%	17%	12%
Str. 4 Needs/wishes/desires	4 %	9 %	3%
Category III Direct reminders			
Str. 5 Performatives	1%	2%	1%
Str. 6 Utterances with ‘remember’, ‘forget’ etc.	19%	11%	15%
Str. 7 Questions to the agreement/debt	6%	4%	1%
Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt	3%	4%	5%

Table 5: *Percentagewise distribution of communicative strategies in all of the 12 DCT situations combined*²⁶

The option of ‘opting out’, included in addition to the categories used by Trosborg (1995) (see Section 4.6) was frequently observed among the answers of both native speakers groups’. While the Am. English participants gave a total of 11% opt outs, with 21% answers classified as opt-outs, thus almost twice as many opt-outs as the English group, this option was the second most frequently chosen with the Danish group.

In Trosborg’s survey, among the native English speakers, strategies of hinting was the second most popular option, thus used 22.8% of the time (ibid.). On their side, Trosborg’s Danish

²⁵ Specific percentages of strategy 2 reminders sub-sub categories are given in my presentation of each of the particular situations discussed (see Section 5.3)

²⁶ Numbers rounded up to whole percentages

participants gave 16.4% classified hints, thus notably less. In my study, both English and Danish native speakers frequently used hints:

'Øv, nu fik vi ikke lavet mat.' (Danish participant in Situation 5)

'Oh, too bad we didn't get to look at the math then' (Am. English participant in Situation 5)

With 11% L1 English answers compared to 19% Danish', the Danish group overall produced the most; thus a bit less than twice as many hints than the English speakers. In isolation, the finding that native English speakers produce overall fewer opt-outs in addition to hints than Danish speakers could indicate that the nature of reminders or the particular situations constructed are considered less imposing to English than Danish native speakers. As discussed in Section 5.4, however, the participants' use of modification strongly contradicts this, and alternative explanations would have to be explored in future research.

According to my findings, in both English and Danish, reminders are most commonly realized as indirect speech acts. Moreover, both have an overall preference for conventionally indirect strategies. With 55% to 39% of their total answers respectively, the strategy is, however, used more often with native English than native Danish speakers. The native speaker groups most frequently gave reminders which reiterated the original request, thus 29% and 24% respectively. Moreover, as it appears from my discussion of the particular situations (Section 5.3) among both groups, most frequent were strategies of permission or ability/availability:

'Hey, can I get the 40 dollars back I lent you? I don't want to forget it before I go home.' (Am. participant in Situation 12)

'Kan jeg ik lige få mine penge onkel?' (Danish participant in Situation 12)

In her study, Trosborg similarly found that English and Danish native speakers with a total of respectively 48.2 % and 59.0% classified conventionally indirect requests, this was the most frequently used strategy (Trosborg, 1995:225). In addition to this, my findings that the greatest part of the conventionally indirect reminders build on the original request of either ability, willingness or permission are directly comparable to the nature of Trosborg's findings that the major part of both native speaker groups.

Not observed with my English speakers, in my study a total 12% of the Danish answers contained the before described conventionalized use of the past modals *kunne*, *måtte* or *skulle*:

'Måtte jeg godt få lidt lasagne?' (Situation 6)

'Kunne vi få noget af lasagnen der?' (Situation 6)

'Kunne jeg få lov til at gå nu?' (Situation 8)

'Jeg **ku** godt gå om 5 min ik'?'' (Situation 8)

In Section 5.5 I suggest that this difference observed may point to larger patterns of communicative habits and indicate underlying differences in politeness systems respectively.

With 17% of the total answers the 12 DCT situations combined, next to str. 2, my L1 English group most frequently opted for str. 3 of conventionally indirect reminders questioning whether the hearer had done what was agreed. This suggests that in L1 English asking to the hearer's completion of a prior engaged act is a commonly accepted way of reminding. With 12%, this tendency is also observed in L1 Danish, however, not as frequently. Arguably, this type of reminders was commonly realized in a similar manner in L1 English and Danish in addition to L2 English. Thus:

'Hva' så med vores matematikopgave?' (Danish participant in Situation 5)

'Didn't we have some homework to do before you head out?' (Am. English participant in Situation 5)

Overall, my findings indicate that questioning whether the hearer has done what was agreed is a conventional way of expressing reminders in both English and Danish.

An interesting observation, with almost twice as many than the Danish group, overall native English speakers used speaker oriented reminders strategies, referring to their own needs/desires or wishes, thus:

'Excuse me...I need to catch a bus in 5 minutes. Is that okay? I will contact my partner outside of class to discuss the rest.' (Am. English participant in Situation 8)

Adding the total numbers of strategies in the 12 DCT situations combined, participants clearly preferred indirect to direct strategies. There are thus no direct categories which were more

frequently used than indirect ones. This agrees with Trosborg's study in which the English group '...performed lower on Cat. IV (direct requests) than on any of the other major categories of request strategies (Trosborg, 1995: 240). This may indicate that deciding to level of directness of act, speakers generally treat requests and reminders alike.

In my study, the native speakers moreover agreed on the extent to which overall some kind of direct strategy was needed. Thus, their direct reminders counted 22% and 21% of their total answers respectively.

One particular subcategory of direct reminders stands out as much more frequently observed than the remaining ones. Thus with 15% and 11% respectively, the Danish and English native speakers generally agreed on the extent that utterances with 'remember' or 'forget' were preferred:

'Remember to cover my shift tomorrow! I owe you' (Am. English in Situation 10)

'Du husker vores aftale i morgen, ik?' (Danish in Situation 10)

All in all, performing reminders, the English and Danish speakers used many similar strategies, notably preferring indirect communication of reminders. The groups, however, do also differ, and most notably with respect to opt-outs and the 'conventionalised past tense modals' observed in Danish responses only. In the following, I look at the learners' behaviour.

Just like the Danish group, learners frequently opted of reminders performance. Thus, with a total of 19% classified opt-outs, the learners were much closer to the Danish group with 21% than the English with only 11% opt-outs. The major part of learner opt-outs was naturally blanks and opt-outs explanations. Additionally, I classified a few learner answers as opt-outs simply because I predicted that the supposed reminding intention behind would not be interpretable:

'Of course. I know you will pay back somehow' (Learner participant in Situation 2
'Reminding friend of debt')

'Hi, it was nice to meet you. Do you remember me?' (Learner participant in Situation 6
'Reminding a friend's neighbor of promised lasagne')

'Hi how are you...I seldom meet people who share my interests. So how was the exhibition?' (Learner participant in Situation 4, 'Reminding of promised tickets')

That the learners and Danish groups respectively gave so many opt-outs compared to English speakers possibly indicates language transfer, which is further discussed in Section 5.5.

With a total of 16% classified hints, the learners came somewhere in between the English group with 11% and the Danish group with 19%:

'I'm really starving and would like some left over lasagne' (Learner participant in Situation 6)

Weizman argues that 'the opacity inherent in hints is exploited by learners as the most efficient means when deniability is needed' (Weizman, 1993:135). In addition to the above discussed problematic opt-out cases, several of my learner hints were only problematically classified as such possibly due to their exploitation of the opacity involved in the performance of hints:

'I am afraid I can't do the assignment, I won't have time...' (Learner participant in Situation 8)

'Hi, I hope we can meet up today?' (Learner participant in Situation 9)

Although situated somewhere in between the native speakers, the learners' distribution *is* closest to that of the Danish group, thus might indicate language transfer (see Section 5.5).

In agreement with the native speakers, learners overall most frequently used conventionally indirect strategies of reminders. This is similar to what Trosborg found in her study on requests (Trosborg, 1995:225). With a total of 38% indirect reminders, my learners' preference was moreover almost identical to that of the Danish group with 39% classified indirect reminders, examples of which include:

'Will you please bring me my shirt before tonight? I have to use it this weekend'
(Learner, Situation 7)

'Sorry. Can I go 20 min early today?' (Learner participant in Situation 8)

With their distribution of conventionally indirect reminders, the learners did not differ from the native speaker groups in their preference of strategies of either permission or ability/willingness. That said, differing from the English target norms but agreeing with L1

Danish norms, the learners' answers contained examples of the conventionally indirect 'past tense modals', thus:

'Could I please not have the money from yesterday back?' (Learner participant in Situation 12)

'Couldn't you help me with my homework first?' (Learner participant in Situation 5)

'Sorry but could I just take some lasagne from the fridge?' (Learner participant in Situation 6)

Not only do these findings indicate differences in the Danish and English politeness systems respectively (see above), they moreover suggest that learners transfer into L2 English what is communicatively acceptable in Danish, however, not observed in the target language. The extent to which language transfer possibly impacted learner performances is further discussed in Section 5.5.

With a distribution of 14% conventionally indirect reminders asking to the hearer's completion of the agreement (i.e. strategy 3), learners came in between the English and Danish speakers, however, closest to the Danish (12%):

'Have you had the chance to look at my paper?' (Learner participant in Situation 1)

'Did we have an agreement about Saturday?' (Learner participant in Situation 3)

The finding suggests that this is an acceptable conventional way of reminding in both English and Danish, and furthermore adopted by the learners performing in L2 English.

In terms of the broad category indirect strategies, none of the three groups differed greatly, and with respect to the subcategories, learners overall resembled the Danish speakers the most. With their overall distribution of direct reminders, however, the learners used more (29%) than both groups of native speakers (21% and 22% respectively). The difference observed is evident in strategy 6 in addition to 7. Thus, to a greater extent than native speakers, learners preferred to use reminders with 'remember' or 'forget' in addition to questions relating to the agreement/debt:

'May I remind you of the lasagne you promised?' (Learner participant in Situation 6)

'Teacher, you promised to correct my paper first, remember?' (Learner participant in Situation 1)

Interesting though this finding is, the difference between the learners on one side and the native speakers on the other is arguably not that pronounced (i.e. a total of 7-8% respectively). Thus, while the learners demonstrate a slight preference for direct strategies compared to that of the native speakers', it is arguably more significant that overall, the learners agreed with native Danish rather than native English speaker norms of reminders communication.

Evaluating my findings in the 12 DCT situations combined, it is evident that there are overall strong similarities but also some pronounced differences between the ways in which native speakers of English and Danish perform reminders. I have found that native speakers of both English and Danish in addition to Danish learners of English generally prefer to use indirect reminders strategies, and more specifically conventionally indirect strategies. Discussed in Section 2.6, according to politeness theory, '...rational face-bearing agents will choose ways of doing face-threatening acts that minimize those threats, hence will choose a higher-numbered strategy as the threat increases' (Brown and Levinson, 1987:83). With conventional indirectness, the speaker goes on-record and performs the speech act, but at the same time preserves the face of the interlocutors (see Section 2.6), thus it is not difficult to explain the preference for hearer-based conventionally indirect strategies in the performance of reminders, just like Trosborg's observation with requests (Trosborg, 1995:234).

Similar to Trosborg, Billmyer and Varghese (2000) found that 80 percent of the English native speakers in their study preferred to use strategies of conventional indirectness for requests.

The resembling findings of the cited studies compared to the present suggest that on a general basis, speakers opt for indirect, on record-strategies when giving both requests and reminders. Thus, speakers generally acknowledge the impositive nature of these speech acts which Brown and Levinson classified as 'Those acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in doing so put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act, A' (see Section 2.6) Building on a scale of increasing directness and relying heavily on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, my findings, however, indicate that it is not necessarily so that 'the greater the indirectness of act, the greater the politeness'. Agreeing that, generally, an indirect speech act is required when expressing reminders in L1 English and Danish in addition to L2 English, the politeness of the indirect reminders realized vary somewhat greatly between the respective groups investigated. In Section 5.4 I discuss the participants'

use of speech act modification arguing that overall, the L1 English reminders are more appealing to the hearer than those produced in L1 Danish and L2 English. What is more, realizations of direct reminders were sometimes found to be more polite than the indirect ones. Compare:

'Can I get my paper back, please?' (Am. English in Situation 1)

'Hi. Remember I still have that thing going on tomorrow and you said you didn't mind covering my shift?' (Am. English in Situation 10)

Being an understudied speech act (see Section 2.4), my findings arguably shed new light on both resemblances and deviations between the related speech acts reminders and requests. Thus, although speakers seem to prefer conventionally indirect strategies when performing requests as well as reminders, several of my sub-categorical findings differed from those observed by Trosborg in her study on requests, and this suggest that speakers see them as separate speech acts, rather than reminders being a sub-version of requests.

Overall, the learners' strategies did, however not pronounced, come closer to the Danish' than the Am. English group's performances. This pattern is most clearly seen in the use of the opt-out category, and supported by the learners' use of the past tense modals which were observed also with the Danish but not with the L1 English group. As discussed in Section 5.4, these similarities in strategies are strongly supported by participants' use of speech act modification. This may indicate transfer from the learners' L1.

Before we can comment further on the extent to which transfer likely has occurred, we need to go into each situation to find out whether certain strategies are transferred or not, and also to look at the contextual parametres of social distance, power, rank of imposition and rights/obligations, which would tell us not only whether Danes transfer their L1 strategies, but maybe also whether the strategies chosen point to differences in the importance of contextual parameters in each culture.

In the following section I present and discuss the particular results from each of the 12 DCT situations.

5.3 The Particular Situations

In the following section I present and discuss my participants' communicative strategies in each of the 12 DCT situations each with their internal structure of +/- marking the situational ranking of the social variables *power*, *distance*, *imposition* and *rights and obligations*. According to politeness theory, a speaker calculates the weightiness of a speech act in the given cultural setting of an utterance by adding up the weight of the imposition, the hearer's power over the speaker and the social distance between them. Moreover, it was my prediction that when deciding on a communicative strategy, speakers include in the calculation their rights and the hearer's obligations involved, as suggested by Thomas (1995; see Section 2.6). As they are presented below, a plus in front of a situation's 'social distance', 'power' and 'imposition' works towards a more indirect expression, while a plus in front of 'rights and obligations' means a tendency towards a more direct expression.

For ease of reference, I discuss the situations not in chronological order, but according to the values of the four variables, moving from the situations requiring *more* to those requiring *less* indirect reminders according to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. I start with a situation where all the variables point towards more indirectness, then follow four situations where three variable points towards more and one towards less indirectness, then four situations where two variables point each way, and finally three situations where all but one variable point towards less indirectness.

Situation 3 'Reminding boss to change work schedule' + <i>Power</i> + <i>Distance</i> + <i>Imposition</i> - <i>Rights and Obligations</i>			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	20% (3)	10% (2)	14% (2)
I Hints	20% (3)	19% (4)	21% (3)
II Conventionally indirect	47% (7)	58% (12)	57% (8)
Str. 2			
Ability/Availability	0%	10% (2)	0%
Willingness	7% (1)	0%	7% (1)
Permission	0%	0%	21% (3)

Past tense modals	0%	0%	0%
Str. 3 Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	33% (5)	43% (9)	29% (4)
Str. 4 Needs/wishes/desires	7% (1)	5% (1)	0%
III Direct	14% (2)	15% (3)	7% (1)
Str. 5 Performatives	0%	10% (2)	0%
Str.6 Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	7%(1)	5% (1)	0%
Str. 7 Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%
Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt	7% (1)	0%	7% (1)

Table 6: *Situation 3*

In addition to percentagewise distributions, in the 12 situations presented, the numbers in parentheses give the raw numbers of each calculation. Since we are dealing with such small numbers overall, we should not read too much into differences of just one answer or two.

In Situation 3, I asked the participants to remind a hearer of + power and + distance (their boss) to perform an act ranked as +R thus costly to the hearer and beneficial to the speaker (the changing of a work schedule in S's favour). The situation was further classified as –RO giving the speaker no *right* to have the schedule changed and the hearer no *obligation* to change it. In Brown and Levinson terminology (see Section 2.6), this situation is then risky because it is threatening to the hearer's negative face, and any strategies of communication require redressive action.

In agreement with the internal structure of the four variables investigated, most participants opted for an indirect communicative strategy or chose to opt out altogether:

'I would assume she just hasn't gotten around to posting the new schedule' (Am. English explaining opting out)

'I would probably hesitate before I could pull myself together...' (Learner explaining opting out)

A pronounced part of answers from all three groups were of either very indirect nature (i.e. hints) or classified as opt-outs. Most common were, however, conventionally indirect reminders questioning whether the hearer had done what was already agreed (strategy 3).

Observed in all three groups, this finding was, however, most pronounced with the L1 English speakers who gave a total 43% str. 3 reminders while the learners gave 33% and the L1 Danish 29%:

'Excuse me, I was wondering if you had a chance to change this Saturday's schedule yet?' (English participant)

'Jeg skal bare være sikker på at min vagt stadig er rykket fra lørdag?' (Danish participant)

'Have you changed the schedule? It doesn't say...?' (Learner participant)

'Hey (name) Did you get a chance to change the work schedule? I'd really appreciate it...' (English participant)

The English group had a somewhat higher number of strategy 3 reminders. In addition, the speech act *modification* (cf. the bolded words) generally varied greatly between the Am. English speakers on one side and the Danish speakers and learners on the other. In Section 5.4 I elaborate this, arguing that on a general basis, the L1 English produced reminders were much more appealing to the hearer than those produced both by speakers of L1 Danish and L2 English.

In Situation 3, 28%, i.e. 4, of the L1 Danish answers were classified as conventionally indirect reiterations of the original request preferably asking the for hearer's *permission* to the agreement made:

'Kan jeg stadig få fri lørdag?' (Danish)

Among the Am. English answers only 10% (2) were classified as conventionally indirect reiterations of the original request, and this concerned only 7% (1) the learners. However, since the numbers are very low, not much can be concluded from the differences.

All groups generally agreeing that Situation 3 requires an indirect speech act, a small group of participants preferred to use direct reminders, including two Am. English participants using a performative verb:

'I just want to **remind** you that I won't be able to work on Saturday' (Am. English)

In his later work on speech act, Austin himself realized that performatives need not be in the present tense (Thomas, 1995: 45). In my classification of performatives, I have thus included also those answers where the verb is not in the simple present tense and/or in the first person (ibid.). Although not observed in great numbers (see previous section), my overall findings suggest that performative reminders *are* used in everyday American English communication.

In Situation 3, all groups thus preferred strategies of conventionally indirectness, as such agreeing with my situational ranking. In the search for tendencies, however, we must necessarily look into the remaining 12 DCT situations.

Situation 1 ‘Reminding teacher of essay agreement’ + <i>Power</i> + <i>Distance</i> + <i>Imposition</i> + <i>Rights and Obligations</i>			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	7% (1)	0%	7% (1)
I Hints	20% (3)	24% (4)	14% (2)
II Conventionally indirect	56% (8)	71% (15)	57% (8)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	7% (1)	9% (2)	7% (1)
Willingness	0%	0%	0%
Permission	7% (1)	5% (1)	14% (2)
Past tense modals	7% (1)	0%	0%
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	35% (5)	57% (12)	29% (4)
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	0%	7% (1)
III Direct	20% (3)	5% (1)	21% (3)
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	0%	0%	7% (1)
<i>Str.6</i> Utterances with ‘remember’, ‘forget’	7% (1)	5% (1)	0%
<i>Str. 7</i> Questions to the agreement/debt	13% (2)	0%	14% (2)
<i>Str. 8</i> Statements about the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%

Table 7 *Situation 1*

In this situation, I asked the participants to take on the role as the pupil (S) reminding the new teacher (H) of a mutual agreement of an early essay return. Thus, all four social variables investigated were marked as +. In this context, the teacher is hierarchically superior to the pupils, and there is also a natural distance between a new teacher and the pupils. It was important for me to emphasise the teacher as ‘new’ as opposed to just ‘teacher’ since the participants may have a different understanding of the variable *social distance* to their real-life well-known teachers. Thus in Denmark, it is my personal experience that the relationship between upper secondary school teachers and their pupils can be rather informal and non-distanced. In Situation 1, the teacher has agreed to correct the speaker’s essay prior to the essays of the rest of the class, for which reason the situation is costly for H and beneficial to S thus the situation is classified as +R (high rank of imposition). Finally, since S has a *right* to get back his essay and H an *obligation* to give it, the situation was classified as +RO (rights and obligation).

While almost no participants chose to opt out of performance altogether, some of the participants, especially the Am. English (24% – 4) but also the learners (20% – 3) and to some extent the Danish participants (14% – 2), gave answers which held cancellable implicatures and were thus classified as hints:

‘It would be nice to correct my paper before leaving’ (Learner participant)

‘It would be nice to get my paper back’ (Am. English participant)

‘Jeg mangler stadig noget feedback på min opgave og jeg rejser’ (Danish participant)

Just like in Situation 3, participants generally preferred indirect strategies. Although having the right to get their essay back, both the native speakers of English and Danish apparently acknowledge the teacher’s superiority and distance in addition to the imposition involved in asking for her to correct their essay in advance.

However, in Situation 1 the Am. English participants stand out with the preference for str. 3 of conventionally indirect reminders questioning whether the hearer has done what was agreed. With 57% (12) answers classified as of strategy 3, the major part of the Am. English answers were typically performed in the following manner:

Excuse me (teacher's name); did you get a chance to correct that paper I gave you yesterday? I'm leaving tomorrow and I would really appreciate it if I could get it back before the end of the end of the day'

'Excuse me, could you let me know if you've had time to look at my paper yet? I'd like to work on while I'm away'

'Hey, have you corrected my paper? I noticed you didn't mention it and I wanted to check with you.'

With only 29% (4) answers classified as strategy 3 reminders, these conventionally indirect utterances were much less frequently observed among the L1 Danish answers:

'Har du rettet min opgave?'

'Jeg vil lige høre om du har fået kigget på min opgave?'

With the Am. English group's clear preference for strategy 3 reminders supported by only half as many Danish answers, we might say that this indicates a difference in the native speaker groups' views on Situation 1. The native speaker deviation is to some extent mirrored by the groups' distribution of direct answers (although these are not numerous). Only one (5%) of the Am. English answers was classified as a direct reminding, while the Danish group had three (21%). With 95% indirect strategies, the native English speakers performed according to my predictions to a greater extent than the native Danish speakers, and consequently it is possible that more Danish than English participants valued their rights and the hearer's obligations involved as determining to the communicative outcome. With 35% of their answers classified as conventionally indirect reminders asking to the hearer's completion of the agreement made, the learners resembled the L1 Danish group:

'Have you had the chance to look at my paper?'

'What about my paper'

In Section 5.1.1, I emphasised that the indirectness of an utterance does not necessarily equal its degree of politeness. In Situation 1, however, the direct Danish and learner formulations were overall less polite than the many indirect Am. English responses:

'Du lovede at rette min opgave og tage den med I dag?' (Danish participant)

'You have forgot my paper' (Learner participant)

'Excuse me, could you let me know if you've had time to look at my paper yet? I'd like to work on while I'm away' (Am. English participant)

'Excuse me...I was wondering if you had the time to correct my paper...I will be out of town so, if you had a chance that's great.' (Am. English participant)

Comparing the findings in Situation 3 and Situation 1, there are few differences worth commenting on. There were a few more opt-outs in Situation 3 and a few more conventionally indirect reminders in Situation 1. This could possibly be a result of + RO of Situation 1 and would agree with the theory that Situation 3 was more face-threatening. To look for a more general picture, however, we must look into the remaining situations.

Situation 4 'Reminding stranger of ticket' - Power + Distance + Imposition - Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	36% (5)	14% (3)	33% (5)
I Hints	14% (2)	48% (10)	27% (4)
II Conventionally indirect	28% (4)	29% (6)	26% (4)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	7% (1)	24% (5)	7% (1)
Willingness	0%	0%	13% (2)
Permission	0%	0%	0%
Past tense modals	0%	0%	7% (1)
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	21% (3)	0%	0%
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	5%	0%
III Direct	21% (3)	10% (2)	13% (2)
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	0%	0%	13% (2)
<i>Str.6</i> Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	14% (2)	10% (2)	0%
<i>Str. 7</i> Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 8</i> Statements about the agreement/debt	7% (1)	0%	0%

Table 8 *Situation 4*

This situation required the participants to remind a party acquaintance, thus a person with whom they are not very familiar, of his offer to provide tickets for an exhibition, and is, alongside Situation 9, the longest and most detailed of the total 12. With the social parameters +D +R but -RO, the situation is arguably highly impositive and consequently I predicted that the participants would opt for indirect rather than direct strategies. Just like the previous situation, this one had one feature pulling towards a less indirect response: the hearer has no power over the speaker, whereas in Situation 1 the hearer had an obligation to do the job that was agreed.

Not surprisingly, very few participants gave direct reminders; only 15% Am. English', 13% Danish' and 21% learner answers were classified as such, a proportion very similar to the one in Situation 1.

In Situation 4, the major part of participant answers were then of indirect nature, indicating that in general, participants were well aware of the risk of face loss involved in the impositive situation described and that this required an indirect speech act. To a greater extent than the English speakers, this concerned the Danish speakers and the learners, who produced more opt-outs and fewer hints than the English speakers. Notably, 33% Danish and 36% learner answers were opt-outs compared to 14% of the Am. English responses. In addition to obvious opt-outs, one learner answer was too difficult to interpret. Consequently, it was categorised as an opt-out.

'Hi, it was nice to meet you...' (I would say nothing if he doesn't).' (Learner participant, opt-out)

'I say nothing.' (Learner participant, opt-out)

'Nice to see you again. What have you been up to?' (Learner participant, classified as opt-out)

Also the three groups' respective distribution of hints deviated between the L1 English speakers on one side and the Danish speakers in addition to the learners on the other. Thus, as many as 48% (10) of the L1 English answers were hints, compared to 27% (4) L1 Danish answers, and only 14% (2) of the learner responses:

'Hi, it is nice to meet you. I have been waiting for you to call me.' (Learner participant)

'Hi, what are you up to this weekend? Still going to the photo exhibition?' (Learner participant)

'Oh hi. How are things? Planning smth special for this weekend?' (Am. English participant)

'Hi, how are you? Oh, it would be nice to go do something this weekend' (Am. English)

'Hva så? Hva skal du lave i weekenden?' (Danish participant)

The deviation in opt-outs and hints observed may suggest that compared to the English native speakers, the native Danish speakers valued the distance to the hearer more important than his lack of superiority over the speaker. In this respect, the learners agreed with the L1 Danish group.

In contrast to the English group, the Danish answers included an instance of the previously discussed 'conventionalised past tense modals'. Thus:

'Hej, kunne jeg få de der billetter vi snakkede om?'

Situation 1 is similar to Situation 4 in terms of the ranking of +D and +R. The situations nevertheless deviate with the variable power marked as +P and -P and RO marked as +RO and -RO respectively. While almost absent in Situation 1, in Situation 4 a considerable part of especially the L1 Danish and L2 English answers were opt-outs. The deviation in the situations' hierarchical distance to the hearer set (i.e. a teacher and a stranger at a party) hardly explains these different distributions of opt-outs. It is, however, possible that the explanation is found in the ranking of RO respectively. Thus, in Situation 1 the speaker has a right to get his essay back (+RO) but in Situation 4 the speaker has no right (-RO) to get the promised tickets and consequently more participants chose to opt out of performance.

Situation 10 'Reminding superior/friend of agreement to cover shift' + Power - Distance + Imposition - Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	0%	0%	13% (2)
I Hints	29% (4)	29% (4)	13% (2)
II Conventionally indirect	42% (6)	53% (11)	47% (7)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	7% (1)	10% (2)	13% (2)
Willingness	7% (1)	10% (2)	7% (1)

Permission	7% (1)	0%	0%
Past tense modals	0%	0%	7% (1)
Str. 3 Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	21% (3)	33% (7)	20% (3)
Str. 4 Needs/wishes/desires	0%	0%	0%
III Direct	29% (4)	19% (4)	27% (4)
Str. 5 Performatives	0%	0%	0%
Str. 6 Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	29% (4)	19% (4)	27% (4)
Str. 7 Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%
Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%

Table 9 'Situation 10'

In Situation 10, I asked the participants to remind a superior at work to cover their work shift. Consequently, the situation was marked +P, -D, +R and -RO.

With 'power' and 'rank of imposition' marked as high and 'rights and obligations' as low, it is not surprising that the major part of the participants used indirect reminding strategies. All groups preferred strategies of conventional indirectness, but while the L1 English group most frequently used strategies asking about the hearer's completion of the act (33%), the Danish group preferred to formulate reiterations of the original request (26%). The learners' answers were equally distributed between the two categories of conventional indirectness with 21% in each:

'I just wanted to make sure that everything is alright with you covering my shift tomorrow?' (Am. English participant)

'Hi, are you still available to cover my shift for tomorrow?' (American English participant)

'Can you still cover my shift tomorrow?' (Learner participant)

'I was wondering if our deal on Friday is still on' (Learner participant)

'Havde du tid til at tage min vagt i morgen?' (Danish participant)

'Kunne du tage min vagt i morgen?' (Danish participant)

The latter Danish example contains the ‘past tense modal’ used to express the reminding, thus belongs to those indirect strategies observed with native Danish speakers only. That such uses were, however, observed also among the learner answers is another matter further discussed in Section 5.5.

Next to conventional indirectness, the native English speakers preferred strategies of hinting (29%). This preference was shared with the learners. Among the native Danish speakers, only 13% hints were observed. Answers classified as hints include:

‘Are you still okay about tomorrow?’ (Am. English participant)

‘I hope you haven’t forgotten about tomorrow’ (Learner participant)

‘Jeg glæder mig til senere’ (og håber han/hun husker aftalen) (Danish participant)

The classification of answers as strategies of hinting was no easy task. Thus, it may be discussed whether some responses such as the above examples are strong enough to count as hints or if the implicatures involved are in fact not cancellable (see Section 5.1). That said, it was my evaluation that the above answers all have clear reminding intentions in addition to cancellable implicatures. In the second example, the participant uses the verb ‘forgotten’, which I have commonly classified as marking a direct reminding (i.e. of strategy 6). Since this particular participant does, however, not mention the agreement and it is not completely clear what the hearer ‘should not forget’, I have classified the answer as a hint.

13% (2) of the Danish group’s Situation 10 answers were classified as opt-outs, which applied to 0% of both the L1 English group and the learner group’s answers. While one of the L1 Danish answers was a regular opt-out, the other was classified as such since the utterance appeared to result from a misunderstanding of the situation described:

‘Hva så? Hva skal du lave i weekenden?’

Although most strategies in Situation 10 were of indirect nature, several of the reminding strategies in all of the groups were classified as ‘on-record’ strategies, more specifically as direct utterances with a given tense and mode of the characteristic verbs ‘remember’ or ‘forget’:

‘Hi. Remember I still have that thing going on tomorrow and you said you didn’t mind covering my shift?’ (Am. English participant)

'You have not forgot to cover my Friday's shift as promised, right?' (Learner participant)

'Remember to cover my shift tomorrow like you said you would' (Learner participant)

'Husk at du har taget min vagt i morgen' (Danish participant)

'Kan du huske hvornår det er du skal tage min vagt i morgen?' (Danish participant)

There were slightly more such answers in this Situation than the previous two, but with so small numbers it is difficult to say whether there was a real difference.

Situation 10 describes a situation in which the speaker has no rights and the hearer no obligations. Judging from answers such as those given above, however, it is possible that some Danish in addition to learner participants 'felt' they had a right to get their work shift covered. In general, their direct answers were less appealing i.e. contained little or no speech act modification (see Section 5.4) compared to the native English speakers' direct responses. Consequently it is possible that the native Danish speakers and learners valued the proximity to the hearer as more important than his or her work superiority in addition to the imposition involved.

Situation 8 'Reminding new teacher of permission to leave early' + Power + Distance - Imposition - Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	0%	5% (1)	7% (1)
I Hints	7% (1)	0%	20% (3)
II Conventionally indirect	43% (6)	62% (13)	39% (6)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	0%	0%	0%
Willingness	0%	0%	0%
Permission	29% (4)	24% (5)	13% (2)
Past tense modals	0%	0%	13% (2)
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	14% (2)	38% (8)	13% (2)
III Direct	50% (7)	33% (7)	34% (5)
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	0%	5% (1)	0%

Str.6 Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	50% (7)	14% (3)	27% (4)
Str. 7 Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	14% (3)	0%
Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt	0%	0%	7% (1)

Table 10 'Situation 8'

This situation required that the participants remind a teacher of an agreement to leave class earlier to catch a bus. Therefore, the parametres were marked as + P, +D –R and –RO and according to my ranking (see Chapter 5), the situation requires a more indirect than direct strategy. Just like Situation 1, 4 and 10, it had three variable pulling towards a more indirect strategy and one pulling towards a less indirect strategy. Consequently, the distribution of answers was highly surprising, and in particular the learners' answers divided 50-50 between indirect and direct strategies of reminding. While the 50% indirect strategies were either conventionally indirect or hints, the 50% direct strategies were all utterances with the verbs 'remember' or 'forget'. On their side, 33% of the English speakers' and 34% of the Danish speakers' answers were direct reminders. From this distribution, it is possible that, overall, participants ranked the -R variable as more important than the + P and +D variables in addition to the –RO. Trosborg writes: 'Direct requests are typically used when compliance is expected, either because the requester is superior in rank to the requestee, or because the favour carries a low degree of imposition' (Trosborg, 1995: 240).

Direct answers include:

'Remember I have to go in a minute to catch my bus, so I can't be in a pair.' (Learner participant)

'Remember I have to leave in a few minutes to catch my bus.' (Learner participant)

'Do you remember yesterday when you said I could leave early today? Well, it's almost time for me to leave, so is it ok if I go?' (Am. English participant)

'Husk at jeg går før i dag!' (Danish participant)

Notwithstanding their many direct reminders, native English speakers preferred to use conventionally indirect strategies (62%), especially speaker-oriented strategies stating their own desires/needs (38%):

'I'd love to work on this, but I need to catch a bus...' (Am. English participant)

'I'm sorry but I need to catch a bus. We discussed this yesterday' (Am. English participant)

This tendency was not equally frequent observed with the native Danish speakers or the learners, who gave respectively 13% (2) and 14 % (2) answers classified as statements of needs/wishes/desires. Trosborg notes that '...statements of wishes and desires are too direct as initial requests in situations in which compliance cannot be expected' (Trosborg, 1995: 238). Different from initial requests, compliance of reminders can, however, be expected. Thus, although the speaker has *no right* to leave class 5 minutes early, in Situation 8 the great distribution of direct reminders indicates that, equal to Situation 10, although marked as absent, many participants felt they had a *right* and the teacher the *obligation* to let them go leave early. The very small number of participants opting-out of performance possibly supports this. That said, in Situation 8 also a great part of L1 English, L1 Danish and learner responses were classified as indirect reminders oriented towards the hearer. Thus, 24%, 29% and 26% of the responses respectively were conventionally indirect reiterations of the request. In agreement with the English speakers, the learners all asked for the hearer's permission, thus:

'Is it okay if I leave...?' (Learner participant)

'Sorry. Can I go 20 min early today?' (Learner participant)

'Is it still okay if I leave in 5 min?' (Am. English participant)

Two native Danish speakers chose to take use of the past tense modals:

'Jeg *ku* godt gå om 5 min ik?'

'Kunne jeg få lov til at gå nu?'

Situation 6 Reminding stranger of lasagne' - Power + Distance - Imposition - Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	36% (5)	57% (12)	53% (8)
I Hints	7% (1)	5% (1)	7% (1)
II Conventionally indirect	35% (5)	34% (7)	40% (6)
Str.2	0%	0%	0%

Ability/Availability			
Willingness	0%	5% (1)	0%
Permission	7% (1)	24% (5)	0%
Past tense modals	7% (1)	0%	20% (3)
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	21% (3)	5% (1)	20% (3)
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	0%	0%
III Direct	21% (3)	5% (1)	0%
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	7% (1)	0%	0%
<i>Str.6</i> Utterances with ‘remember’, ‘forget’	0%	5% (1)	0%
<i>Str. 7</i> Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 8</i> Statements about the agreement/debt	14% (2)	0%	0%

Table 11 ‘*Situation 6*’

Situation 6 is the first to be discussed of four situations where two variables pull towards a more indirect strategy and two towards a less indirect one. I asked the participants to remind ‘a friend’s new neighbour’ of some promised left-over lasagne. Situation 6 is thus somewhat parallel to Situation 4; in both situations the relationship between speaker and hearer is that of almost or complete strangers, but without power asymmetry, and the hearer has no obligation to provide the goods in question (– P, +D and – RO). Compared to the tickets in Situation 4, however, the rank of imposition involved in asking for ‘leftover lasagne’ in Situation 6 is judged to be lower, thus set to -R.

Although this situation had two features assumed to be pulling towards less indirect strategies, it was the one with the most opt-outs and least direct reminders so far. That is, the participants most pronouncedly preferred indirect reminding, and several chose to opt out of performance altogether.

Just like Situation 1, 3 and 8, Situation 4 and 6 are –D. Since the latter situations, which both –P gave significantly more opt-out answers than the former ones, it is possible that participants actually consider hearers such as teachers (Situations 1 and 8) and bosses (Situation 3) as less socially distant, maybe because they belong to the same workplace or

school as the speaker, creating some kind of bond. It is moreover possible that the power involved is not deemed to be as great as to counteract the social distance in Situation 4 and 6.

That said, as discussed below, in Situation 6 some comic male Danish opt-outs indicate proximity rather than distance to the ‘stranger’ hearer, and in both Situation 2 and 12 have fairly high numbers of opt-outs, and these situations are –D. So there does not seem to be a clear pattern.

With respectively 36% of the learners’, 52% of the English speakers’ and 54% of the Danish speakers’ answers classified as opt-outs, this option was clearly the most frequent. Some of both the learners and native Danish speakers chose to explain their opt-outs:

‘Nothing. I would act like I wasn’t hungry.’ (Learner participant)

‘Jeg ville ikke sige noget. Det er min egen skyld, jeg er sulten.’ (Danish participant)

‘Nothing. I would already feel rude about receiving food from a stranger, and to go and beg him for it?’ (Danish participant)

The explanations for opt-outs were all given by females. While the girls either opted out with a blank or the making of an excuse ‘to leave early’ in addition to explaining this decision from ‘embarrassment’, several male answers classified as opt-outs were rather comic, nevertheless non-reminding approaches to the situation described:

‘Hey **dude**, fetch me a beer as well! Btw, could we call for some pizza?’ (Learner participant)

‘Skal vi ikke bestille en pizza?’ (Danish participant)

‘Må jeg **nappe** en bajer?’ (Danish participant)

Predicting that, on their own, these answers are not sufficient as to remind the hearer of his promise, I, however, acknowledge the possibility that those of the above answers referring to food could be classified as hints.

With the +D variable, it is surprising that these boys used such expressions indicating proximity to the hearer. Contrary to my predictions, these utterances do not appeal to the hearer’s *negative* but to their *positive* face (see Section 2.6). The Am. English opt-outs were all blanks. This suggests there might be a difference between the way in which native Danish and native English speakers respectively view the distance to ‘strangers’, or that the cultural norms of politeness routines vary. In my opinion, the latter is very likely the case. Thus, in

general, Danish culture is very direct and what may seem impolite in Am. English would not seem so in Danish.

In addition to opt-outs, in Situation 8 all groups preferred strategies of conventional indirectness. With 24% of their total answers, the English speakers preferred reiterations of the original request, while the Danish participants and the learners had a fairly even distribution between reiteration of request and indirect reminders questioning the hearer's completion of the act (strategy 3). In contrast to the native English speakers, the Danish group used past tense modals to signal previous agreement 20% of the time. This was also observed with 7% (1) of the learners:

'Hvaaa... **Ku** vi ikk få noget af lasagnen der?' (Danish participant)

'**Kunne** jeg få noget af den der lasagne? ☺' (Danish participant)

'**Måtte** jeg godt få lidt lasagne?' (Danish participant)

'Sorry, but **could** I just take lasagne from the fridge?' (Learner participant)

Used in this way, in Danish the modals *kunne*²⁷/*måtte* refer back in time to the prior agreement. Presumably, the learner's use of *could* is equivalent to and deriving from the Danish use of *kunne*. In Section 5.5, I comment further on this observed tendency and argue that it may reflect L1 transfer. In either way, the verbs are not used simply as means of syntactic modification with the aim to express politeness, which I otherwise observed with the Am. English answers:

'Sorry, but **could** I have some of that leftover lasagne? It's okay if no, but...' (Am. English participant)

In previous situations, however, I have also discussed both L1 Danish and L2 learner answer in which the past tense modal *is* used to express politeness, in this way agreeing with L1 English norms.

Situation 6 is marked by an almost total absence of direct strategies within all groups, most pronounced the Danish group with 0% and the English with 5% (1) answers. The learners used direct strategies 21% of the time; 14% were classified the very direct strategy 7, 'questions about the agreement/debt':

²⁷ Norwegian 'skulle' can be used in a similar way.

'Is the lasagne deal still on?'

'Excuse me, were we going to eat?'

Agreeing on the number of opt-outs and the use of conventionally indirect rather than direct strategies, the native speaker groups were very similar in terms of strategies chosen. That said, the use of past tense modals observed suggest possible L1 pragmatic transfer from Danish even in this situation (see Section 5.5).

Situation 9 'Reminding stranger to give back lost phone' -Power + Distance + Imposition + Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	20% (3)	0%	7% (1)
I Hints	13% (3)	14% (3)	29% (4)
II Conventionally indirect	33% (5)	80% (17)	64% (9)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	33% (5)	14% (3)	14% (2)
Willingness	0%	5% (1)	0%
Permission	0%	24% (5)	36% (5)
Past tense modals	0%	0%	7% (1)
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	0%	14% (3)	7% (1)
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	23% (5)	0%
III Direct	33% (5)	5% (1)	0%
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str.6</i> Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	13% (2)	5% (1)	0%
<i>Str. 7</i> Questions to the agreement/debt	20% (3)	0%	0%
<i>Str. 8</i> Statements about the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%

Table 12 'Situation 9'

This situation, ranked as -P, +D, +R and +RO, was the most difficult to create. Due to the internal organisation of the social variables, I found it difficult to determine what exactly

constituted ‘sufficient contextual information’ (see Chapter 4). All the same, no participant answers indicated misunderstandings of the situation intended.

In Situation 9, it is first and foremost the learners’ 33% direct reminders which stand out in contrast to the 5% and 0% from the native English and Danish speakers respectively:

‘I suppose you have forgotten to call me? So now I’m calling you. Can we meet up?’
(Learner participant)

‘This is the owner of the phone. You forgot to call me!’ (Learner participant)

‘You said you would come through the day. Now its evening and I’ve been waiting all day...’ (Learner participant)

‘Hello, this is... I’m sorry to interrupt but did you forget our agreement to meet up?’
(Am. English participant)

Overall, the learners tend to be quite similar to the Danish group in strategies chosen; however, in both this situations and Situation 6 described above the learners gave considerably more direct reminders than the respective native speaker groups. The 12 DCT situations combined, the learners *did* produce slightly more direct strategies than the native speakers, but only in Situation 9 was the difference between learner and Danish contributions this pronounced. The significant number of direct learner contributions is difficult to explain but may indicate that even at the advanced level, learners may not be so good at judging how polite or impolite something sounds in in the L2 language. Thus, they may lack the sufficient pragmatic resources.

Just like in Situation 6 and 4 above, the hearer was set to be a stranger without power over the speaker. Thus this situation was also classified as –P and +D. As argued above, it could be that the social distance made the speech acts seem more threatening than the other situations. It might therefore seem strange that this situation had fewer opt-outs and rather more conventionally indirect strategies. However, in contrast to the above situations, the speaker here had more of a right to get his/her property back (+RO), and it could also be that it meant more to the speaker to get back their mobile phone than to avoid going hungry for a night or be able to go to an exhibition. In Situation 9, the major part of both native speaker groups performed with indirect communicative strategies reiterating the original request, preferably of permission:

'Hi, I really need my phone back. Could I come by you and pick it up?' (Am. English participant)

'Hej, jeg ville bare lige høre om det var ok jeg kom i aften og henter min tlf.?' (Danish participant)

In accordance with a general tendency (see Section 5.4), in Situation 9 the Am. English answers were overall polite, thus demonstrating preserving the hearer's negative face:

'Hi, I'd really like my phone back. Is there a place I can go to pick it up? I don't want to inconvenience you.' (Am. English participant)

'Hi, sorry to bother you but I was wondering if it would still be possible to pick up my phone this evening?' (Am. English participant)

Regardless of strategy, however, in Situation 9 also many Danish and learner answers appeared polite:

'Hej, jeg ville bare lige høre om det var ok jeg kom i aften og henter min tlf.?' (Danish participant)

'Hey again, it's the owner of the phone. Since you didn't call me today, so that we could meet up, can we please meet tomorrow?' (Learner participant)

The overall polite realisations of reminders observed in Situation 9 suggest that speakers were in general aware of the imposition involved in asking for the hearer's trouble to give them back their phone in addition to an awareness of the hearer's fortunate position of holding the speaker's possession. As discussed in Section 5.4, however, such modification of the utterance was not the norm among L1 Danish and learner answers.

Situation 11 'Reminding uncle/host father of permission to stay out late' + Power -Distance - Imposition - Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	20% (3)	10% (2)	29% (4)
I Hints	33% (5)	33% (7)	50% (7)
II Conventionally indirect Str. 2	27% (4)	43% (9)	7% (1)

Ability/Availability	0%	0%	0%
Willingness	0%	14% (3)	0%
Permission	27% (4)	24% (5)	7% (1)
Past tense modals	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	0%	5% (1)	0%
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	0%	0%
III Direct	33% (5)	15% (3)	14% (2)
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 6</i> Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	0%	10% (2)	7% (1)
<i>Str. 7</i> Questions to the agreement/debt	33% (5)	0%	7% (1)
<i>Str. 8</i> Statements about the agreement/debt	0%	5% (1)	0%

Table 13 'Situation 11'

Because I had difficulties finding an appropriate situation to go with the parameters of +P, -D, -R and -RO, Situation 11 also took a long time to construct. The situation was modified several times, e.g. after consulting a native speaker of American English, who advised me to change the American DCT situation regarding the precise time of curfew from 3²⁸ until 1. Changing and modifying the situation, I eventually decided on the hearer as an uncle (the English and Danish DCT versions) /host father (the L2 English version). Because of the possible difference in intimacy between the speaker and that of an uncle compared to the speaker to that of a host father, I predicted this might be a source of conflict of analysis.

Deviating from both native speaker groups, in Situation 11 the learners gave as many 33% direct reminders, which were all 'questions about the agreement made':

'And I had to be home by 3 right?' (Learner participant)

'Did we have an agreement?' (Learner participant)

Just like in Situation 9 and 6 previously discussed, the learners' use of direct reminders was here a fair amount higher than that of the English and Danish native speaker groups, with 15% and 14% respectively. Therefore, the potential source of conflict mentioned, if anything,

²⁸ This time was maintained in the learners' English and Danish versions.

worked against my expectations. Thus, finding that the learners gave more direct reminders to the host father than the native speakers to the uncle contradict my prediction that possibly the relation to a host father would be more socially distant than that to an uncle. The learners' distribution of direct strategies is probably related to a general, although not pronounced, tendency, for the learners to be more direct, rather than a difference in how they view host fathers and uncles.

According to my ranking of the situation inspired by politeness theory, Situation 11 falls in between those situations requiring very indirect and those 'permitting' more direct communicative strategies. Therefore, it was somewhat surprising that as many as 50% of the Danish answers were classified as hints:

'Vi ses senere sådan som aftalt. Hej hej.' (Danish participant)

'Super sødt af jer at lade mig være ude længere, ses!' (Danish participant)

Hints were also commonly observed among the L1 English (33%) in addition to the learners' answers (33%):

'Have a good night, see you in the morning since you are probably sleeping when I come home late' (Learner participant)

'Thanks for giving me permission to stay out later. I appreciate it.' (Am. English participant)

Of all 12 DCT situations, Situation 11 had the highest percentage of hints. That so many participants chose to give very indirect reminders goes against my predictions. It suggests that the uncle's/host father's superiority (+P) in addition to the speaker's lack of right to 'stay out later' (-RO) was considered as *more* important than the closer social distance (-D) to hearer and the small imposition involved (-R). That so many Danish participants acted off record disagrees with my ranking of the situations' internal pattern of social variables, and consequently it is a post-survey consideration whether my choice of hearer was in fact adequate to the situation intended or whether some social distance was in fact felt to be present.

Situation 12 ‘Reminding uncle/host father of debt’ + Power - Distance + Imposition +Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	36% (5)	14% (3)	40% (6)
I Hints	14% (2)	10% (2)	0%
II Conventionally indirect	21% (3)	77% (12)	33% (5)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	7% (1)	14% (3)	7% (1)
Willingness	0%	0%	0%
Permission	7% (1)	14% (3)	13% (2)
Past tense modals	7% (1)	0%	0%
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	0%	19% (4)	13% (2)
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	10% (2)	0%
III Direct	28% (4)	19% (4)	27% (4)
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	0%	0%	7% (1)
<i>Str.6</i> Utterances with ‘remember’, ‘forget’	21% (3)	14% (3)	7% (1)
<i>Str. 7</i> Questions to the agreement/debt	7% (1)	0%	0%
<i>Str. 8</i> Statements about the agreement/debt	0%	5% (1)	13% (2)

Table 14 ‘*Situation 12*’

In Situation 12 the hearer remains the uncle/ host father already introduced in Situation 11 thus the variables remain +P and -D. In contrast to Situation 11, however, Situation 12 is requires that the speaker remind the hearer of a debt (\$40 /200 kr.) for which reason the imposition involved is high. At the same time, the speaker has a *right* to get their money back and the hearer the *obligation* to give it, hence +RO. Situation 12 thus has as many variables pulling towards an less indirect expression as situation 11, and is among those so far where we should expect least indirect speech acts. I was therefore surprised to find that as many as 36% of the learners and 40% of the Danish participants opted out of performance. The English speakers, who overall opted out more seldom, also had one of their highest percentages of opt-outs here (only Situation 6 had more, and that situation had an equal

number of features pulling towards less indirectness). Several participants explain their decision to opt out:

'Nothing. I will say it when I need it and he hasn't payed me back.' (Learner participant)

'Jeg siger ikke noget. Det er familie.' (Danish participant)

'Ingenting. Jeg spiser og bor hos dem, og desuden er han min onkel.' (Danish participant)

'Nothing. It's gracious enough of them to let me stay with them. The least I can do is pay for groceries.' (Am. English participant)

In addition to the great distribution of both Danish and learners opt-outs, it is thus interesting that some of the Danish participants opting out of performance in this situation marked as –D explain their decision to opt-out from the very fact that the hearer is a person with whom they are intimate, giving them 'the license' to be more direct. Thus, '...if you feel close to someone, because that person is related to you...you feel less need to employ indirectness in, say, making a request than you would if you were making the same request of a complete stranger' (Thomas, 1995:128). Therefore, I predict that the decision of so many Danish' in addition to learner participants to opt out of performance should be seen as part of a general tendency rather than a result of this situation's ranking of variables.

With 28% answers classified conventionally indirect reminders asking about the hearer's ability/availability or permission, this was the most frequently observed strategy among the L1 English speakers:

'Hi Uncle, I've been eyeing this (piece of merchandise) for a while now and it costs 40\$. Can you lent me the money and we'll be even for yesterday afternoon? Thanks Uncle, you're a pie!' (Am. English participant)

'Hey...I was wondering if I could possibly have the 40 dollars back that I lent you. No rush, but it would be nice to have it soon. Thanks!' (Am. English participant)

With 21% and 20% respectively, also a notable part of both the learners and the native Danish speakers used such request formulations to perform their reminding:

'I'm sorry, but can I get the 40 dollars from yesterday? I need it tomorrow.' (Learner participant)

'Kan jeg ik' lige få mine penge onkel?' (Danish participant)

While the majority of answers given by all groups were classified as either indirect strategies or opt-outs, a significant amount of answers were also classified as direct reminders. Most of these were of strategy 6 'utterances with 'remember' or 'forget'.

'Husk at du skylder mig 200 kroner, som du lovede at gi mig tilbage' (Danish participant)

'Hi, remember to give me back my money as you said you would' (Learner participant)

'Don't forget to pay me back the 40 dollars you lent yesterday. You're not that old that I have to take care of you yet. Haha' (Am. English participant)

Notwithstanding the distribution of direct reminders, Situation 12 is marked by the surprisingly great amount of opt-outs found with the learners' and the Danish groups' replies, in this way deviating from the NS English' answers. Similarly, the learners and Danish participants have fewer conventionally indirect reminders than the English speakers. In Section 5.5 I discuss the possible extent to which L1 transfer impacts on the learners' answers.

Situation 7 'Reminding friend to return borrowed shirt' -Power - Distance + Imposition +Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	0%	0%	7% (1)
I Hints	13% (2)	0%	14% (2)
II Conventionally indirect	66% (10)	100% (21)	56% (8)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	7% (1)	14% (3)	14% (2)
Willingness	13% (2)	10% (2)	7% (1)
Permission	13% (2)	24% (5)	7% (1)
Past tense modals	0%	0%	7%(1)
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	26% (4)	19% (4)	14% (2)
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	7% (1)	33% (7)	7% (1)
III Direct	20% (3)	0%	21% (3)

Str. 5 Performatives	0%	0%	7% (1)
Str.6 Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	20% (3)	0%	14% (2)
Str. 7 Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%
Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%

Table 15 *Situation 7*

We now move to the final three situations, which have only one variable pulling in the direction of more indirectness, and three pulling in the opposite direction. Situation 7 required that the participants remind a friend and work colleague to return a borrowed shirt. Consequently, I marked the situational variables -P, -D, +R and +RO. I ranked the situation as +R because I considered that to most people a deadline is considered impositive. However, I acknowledge that this particular +R variable may be debated, since the actual ranking of imposition may depend on factors such as the more precise geographical distance between the work place and the hearer's home. Since the variables P and D were ranked as low in addition to RO as high, it was surprising to find that most participants opted for indirect communicative strategies. The participants' distribution of indirect answers, may, however, agree with my situational ranking as +R. Thus, not one Am. English answer was classified as a direct reminding. Among the Danish speakers' and the learners' answers, the distribution of direct reminders was 20% and 21% respectively.

'You forgot to bring me my shirt and I need it...' (Learner participant, strategy 6)

'Husk at du lovede at tage min trøje med' (Danish participant, strategy 6)

'Hva' sker der for at jeg skal minde dig om at medbringe den trøje som du skulle give mig tilbage?' (Danish participant, strategy 5)

Although the Am. English group's lack of direct strategies may suggest overall 'safer' communicative behaviour, in contrast to the Danish group and the learners, as many as 33% of the Am. English answers were classified as conventionally indirect strategies of needs/wishes/desires, thus oriented towards the speaker rather than the hearer:

'I really need my shirt back, and I will drive to your house to get it if I need to' (Am. English participant)

'Hey dude, I need to have my shirt back' (Am. English participant)

Notwithstanding the above mentioned deviations, with 33%, 48% and 33% respectively, most learners, native English and native Danish speakers agreed that Situation 7 required conventionally indirect reminders formulated as requests:

'I was wondering; could I please get my shirt back soon?' (Am. English participant)

'Can you please bring me my shirt tomorrow? I need it for this weekend.' (Am. English participant)

'Will you please bring my shirt before tonight? I have to use it this weekend' (Learner participant)

'Kunne du ikke lige tage min trøje med næste gang..?' (Danish participant)

In contrast to my expectations, in Situation 7 the groups generally agreed on the performance of indirect speech acts, and with the nature of the situation, I was most surprised to find that no native English speakers gave direct reminders. Thus, it is possible that the act of asking someone to return an object is in general considered more imposing than I expected. Even in a context of situations where the hearer is, by nature, an intimate.

Situation 2 'Reminding friend of debt' -Power - Distance + Imposition +Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	33% (5)	14% (3)	27% (4)
I Hints	13% (2)	24% (5)	27% (4)
II Conventionally indirect	7% (1)	15% (3)	7% (1)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	7% (1)	10% (2)	0%
Willingness	0%	5% (1)	0%
Permission	0%	0%	0%
Past tense modals	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	0%	7% (1)

III Direct	47% (7)	49% (10)	40% (6)
Str. 5 Performatives	0%	5% (1)	0%
Str. 6 Utterances with 'remember', 'forget'	40% (6)	29% (6)	20% (3)
Str. 7 Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	5% (1)	20% (3)
Str. 8 Statements about the agreement/debt	7% (1)	10% (2)	0%

Table 16 *Situation 2*

This situation required that the participants reminded a friend who, asking to borrow 8 dollars/40 kr., already owed them a substantial amount of money. Consequently, the situation was marked as -P, -D, +R and +RO, thus equal to Situation 7.

The values of the variables in Situation 2 are equal to those in Situation 7, giving us two situations with identical patterns. It was, however, my intention to see if participants would act differently in a situation involving money. Thus, I ranked Situation 2 as +R with the argument that in general the act of asking someone for money is highly impositive if not the most imposing act all of the 12 DCT situations. Thus, both marked as +, it was my prediction that participants would consider the task of asking someone for money more imposing than the imposition involved in Situation 7. In the discussion of Situation 7, I argued that 'the + R variable may be debated as the actual ranking of imposition may depend on factors such as the more precise geographical distance between the work place and H's home'. Regardless of such contextual elements, the act of reminding someone of money (Situation 2) is, comparatively, always highly impositive.

In both Situation 2 and 7, I observed more indirect strategies than expected. Only in Situation 2, however, a considerable part of the answers were opt-outs. This finding suggests a difference in situational face-threat, thus, that the task in Situation 2 of reminding a friend of money is more imposing than asking a friend to return a shirt, regardless of geographical distance between work place and the hearer's home. The finding was most pronounced with learners and Danish speakers; however, I also found it among the L1 English group's answers.

In Situation 2, the participants also used notably more very indirect strategies, i.e. of hinting. With 24% and 27% respectively, the English and Danish speakers actually preferred the strategy of hinting, whereas in Situation 7, I found hints in 0% of the L1 English and only 14% of the L1 Danish answers. Situation 2 hints include:

'Du glemmer din pung meget for tiden? Men ok, det kan du godt.' (Danish participant)

'I'll put it on your tab' (Am. English participant)

From their respective distributions of very indirect reminders and opt-outs, the participants' answers suggest that Situation 2 and Situation 7 are generally viewed differently in terms of face-threat. This may support my prediction that asking someone for money is in fact much more imposing than asking for your shirt back. That said, other findings may contradict this possibility. Thus, in Situation 2 as many as 47%, 49% and 40% of the native English speakers, the learners and the Danish speakers respectively went *on record* with direct reminders. Thus in Situation 2 notably more English-speaking participants and the same numbers of learners and Danish participants used direct reminders compared to Situation 7. The many opt-outs, in particular observed with L1 Danish and learners, suggest that the imposition in Situation 2 is higher than that in Situation 7. All the same, the participants' distribution of direct reminders suggest otherwise:

'Sure, but you do owe me already. Remember?' (Learner participant)

'Ok, sure, but dont forget the money you owe me from last week' (Am. English participant)

'Ok, but I should have to remind you to pay me back the money' (Am. English participant)

'Ok, så kan du jo bare betale gælden samlet senere? Husk at du skylder mig!' (Danish participant)

Thus with the nature of their answers that in Situation 2, those native speakers of English and Danish in addition to those learners performing on-record were concerned with their right to get their money back.

The distributions of answers found in Situations 7 and 2 respectively suggest that speakers do in fact not view them as equally face-threatening. With more opt-outs and hints but also more direct reminders, my findings do not clearly confirm my prediction that asking for money is more imposing than asking for your shirt back. Brown and Levinson do suggest that all variables are scalar. But for purposes of easier comparison of the factors, I used high and low

values. My findings, however, do suggest that instead of a situational ranking of +/-, the imposition in a given situation should be ranked alternatively. A possible solution for future research could be the use of a scale ranging from 1-12 with 1 as the least imposing and 12 as the most imposing act. Such a ranking would presumably allow for more detailed analysis of answers and is strongly suggested for further research.

Situation 5 ‘Reminding friend to help with homework’ - Power - Distance - Imposition - Rights and Obligations			
Category	Learners	Am. English	Danish
0 Opt-outs	27% (4)	14% (3)	36% (5)
I Hints	27% (4)	19% (4)	7% (1)
II Conventionally indirect	27% (4)	48% (10)	36% (5)
<i>Str.2</i> Ability/Availability	7% (1)	38% (8)	7% (1)
Willingness	0%	0%	0%
Permission	0%	0%	0%
Past tense modals	20% (3)	0%	14% (2)
<i>Str. 3</i> Questions of whether the hearer has done what was agreed	0%	10% (2)	14% (2)
<i>Str. 4</i> Needs/wishes/desires	0%	0%	0%
III Direct	20% (3)	20% (4)	21% (3)
<i>Str. 5</i> Performatives	0%	10% (2)	0%
<i>Str.6</i> Utterances with ‘remember’, ‘forget’	7% (1)	0%	14% (2)
<i>Str. 7</i> Questions to the agreement/debt	0%	0%	0%
<i>Str. 8</i> Statements about the agreement/debt	13% (2)	10% (2)	7% (1)

Table 17 ‘Situation 5’

In Situation 5, I asked the participants to remind a friend to help them with homework, for which reason the four social parameters were ranked as -P, -D, -R and -RO. Like the two previous situations, three of the variables point toward the use of less indirect reminders. Therefore, it was highly surprising to find that most participants used either indirect reminders including the very indirect hints or chose to opt out altogether. The latter most

pronouncedly concerned the Danish group and the learners who used 36% and 27% opt-outs respectively compared to 14% of the native English speakers. These findings suggest that participants did not agree with my situational ranking.

In Situation 5, the nature of most participant answers suggests that regardless of strategy, it was important to keep intact the harmonious relationship to the hearer. Possibly not agreeing with my classification of –R, several participants then aimed to minimize the hearer’s cost involved by offering to ‘stay for dinner’ etc.:

‘Well, this has been fun. Call me after dinner, maybe we can talk about math?’
(Am. English participant)

‘Why don’t you stay for dinner...my mom makes the best rice...Then we can finish our math and watch TV afterwards’ (Am. English participant)

‘Wouldn’t you like to have dinner with us? Then you can help me afterwards’
(Learner)

In Situation 5 the most frequently observed strategies were conventionally indirect ones of strategy 2 or 3, representing 27% of the learners’, 48% of the Am. English’ and 35% of the Danish group’s answers:

‘Ok, but can we go over my math first?’ (Am. English participant)

‘Can you first make the essay with me’ (Learner participant)

14% of the Danish strategy 2 answers were classified ‘past tense modals:

‘**Kunne** vi ikk lige først få kigget på den opgave der?’

‘Men **kunne** du lige hjælpe mig med det mat først?’

My finding in the 12 DCT situations overall suggest that in Danish, this is a commonly accepted way to give reminders. The tendency was moreover observed with the Danish learners answering in L2 English:

‘**Couldn’t** you help me with my homework first?’ (Learner participant)

‘But you **should** help me with my homework?’ (Learner participant)

In Section 5.5 I take this further, suggesting that the learners’ use of past tense modals indicate negative L1 transfer into L2 performances.

Generally preferring indirect strategies, in Situation 5 also a significant number of participants went on-record with direct reminders, preferably giving statements about the agreement/debt:

'But you agreed to do the assignment with my first' (Learner participant)

'I thought you were going to help me with the paper like you said' (Am. English participant)

'Du sagde ellers at du ville hjælpe mig med min opg. Jeg har brug for din hjælp' (Danish participant)

The situational findings; some final comments

In the analysis above, I ranked the 12 DCT situations according to their respective patterns of social variables. Beginning with Situation 3 and ending with Situation 5, I thus moved from the ones that were thought to require more indirect strategies towards the ones that were thought to allow more direct expressions. I was surprised to find that even in the situations supposed to allow for more direct reminders, participants preferred indirect communicative strategies. There were thus no situations in which any of the groups gave more direct than indirect reminders. As the variables changed, directness of expressions did not increase.

In Chapter 2, I specified that in general, the communicative strategy of indirectness is both costly and risky since it requires more time for the speaker to produce and longer time for the hearer to process. My findings nevertheless suggest that regardless of the situational context's *power, distance, imposition* and *rights and obligation*, speakers generally prefer indirect to direct reminders, moreover that conventional indirectness is no alternative to direct speech acts but a primary choice. In her study, Trosborg found that native speakers of both English and Danish in addition to Danish learners of English gave significantly more indirect than direct requests (Trosborg, 1995:225). Thus, just like requests, my findings support my prediction that speakers generally view the act of reminding as impositive and face threatening (see Section 2.4).

Exceptions to this general tendency is, however, observed in my particular Situations 2 and 8, where 50% or close to 50% of participants, most notably the learners, preferred to use direct reminders. Also in other situations such as 6, 9 and 11, the learners gave overall more direct reminders than both native speaker groups. According to my ranking, these situations are

nevertheless rather different i.e. hold varying patterns of the social variables investigated. Thus, Situation 2 is for instance marked as +P, +D, -R and -RO (set to move towards direct expressions) while Situation 8 is ranked +P, +D, -R and -RO (set to move towards indirect expressions).

Overall, all groups of participants seem to vary in a similar way from situation to situation, demonstrating some sensitivity to the social variables investigated, however many times contrary to my expectations and ranking of situations. This could either be because the valuations are wrong or because there are more variables playing a role and subtle differences that should be taken into account. Although some of my classification of variables may be discussed, it is unlikely that the values are totally wrong in all the situations concerned. Thus friends and family *are* socially much closer than new neighbours and acquaintances. It is possible that more variables than those here investigated play a role in the speaker's decision of reminding strategy. Such potential factors include a speaker's urgency to complete with the reminding. Thus, if something is very important to a speaker, she might go on record even if the act is threatening, whereas if it is not so important to her, she might choose to opt out even if the act was not terribly threatening.

Overall, my results show that evaluating the exact strength is difficult. As previously suggested (see Situation 2) a more exact ranking (e.g. from 1-12) of the situational variables, however, might have been helpful.

In the total 12 DCT situations combined, the learners *do* come closer to the L1 Danish than the L1 English group in terms of communicative strategies. Thus, in situations 4, 11, 12, 2 and 5, the L1 Danish and the L2 English answers count significantly more opt-outs than the L1 English answers. Situations 2 and 12 both evolve around the reminding of money, classified as a very imposing act. The findings suggest that to a greater extent than L1 English speakers, Danish speakers performing in L1 Danish as well as in L2 English prefer to opt out of situations involving money. In addition to the many opt-outs, with their conventionalised use of 'past tense modals', most significant in situations 6 and 5, the L1 Danish group and the learners strongly contrasted the L1 English speakers. Not observed with L1 English speakers, in Section 5.5 I suggest that the learners' use of past tense modals stems from mother tongue influence.

At several points in the discussion above, I have mentioned that the Danish group and the learners on one side and the English speakers on the other deviated with respect to their use of speech act modification. In the following section, I discuss the participants' use of both internal and external modification emphasising what has already been indicated: with their lack of sufficient speech act modification in the 12 DCT situations, the learners strongly resemble the L1 Danish participants and differ from the L1 English respondents.

5.4 Modification

In the following section I discuss my participants' use of speech act modification observed in the 12 DCT situations combined. In Section 4.6, I presented my model for analysis of reminders, which builds on Trosborg's (1995) model for analysis of request strategies. I emphasised that in addition to communicative strategies, evaluation of learners' L2 speech act production should include also their use of speech act *modification*. Since I aim to compare my results to Trosborg's, I will mostly be using her terminology of *external* and *internal* modification instead of Brown and Levinson's terminology (see Section 2.6). Since reminders are inherently impositive, just like requests (Trosborg, 1995:209) and other speech acts, it is useful for the speaker to use certain downgrading devices and supportive statements to tone down the impact.

Average number of speech act modification pr. DCT situation analysed			
	<i>Learners</i>	<i>Am. English</i>	<i>Danish</i>
Syntactic downgraders (conditionals, embedding, past tense, questions)	3.50	6.33	3.07
Lexical/phrasal downgraders (politeness markers, hesitators, understaters, hedging)	2.77	4.30	1.41
External Modification (preparators, cost minimizers, disarmers, sweeteners,	5.80	10.23	4.90

supportive reasons, smileys)			
Total	12.07	20.86	9.38

Table 18 *Modification of the reminders in the study*

According to my findings, the native English speakers provided significantly more external modification, such as *supportive moves*, *disarmers*, *cost minimizers*, *preparators* and *sweeteners* (see Section 4.6), in addition to more syntactic and lexical downgraders than any of the other groups.

5.4.1 Syntactic downgraders

As presented in Table 17, the native English speakers used about twice as much syntactic modification than both the Danish and the learner groups. With an average of 3.50 and 3.07 syntactic downgraders respectively, the learners came significantly closer to the Danish than the English group with 6.33 syntactic modifiers per reminding situation. The L1 English participants frequently used *the past tense*, *questioning* and *embedding* (often of *conditional clauses*), thus all devices mentioned in Trosborg's list on syntactic downgraders (Trosborg, 1995: 209-214):

'Excuse me, but I was wondering if you got a chance to correct my paper yet?' (Am. English participant)

'Hey, did you (name) get a chance to change the schedule yet? I'd really appreciate it and I can help you if you need it.' (Am. English participant)

Also the Danish answers count examples of all of the mentioned downgrading devices, these did, however, occur with *much* less frequently than among the L1 English responses:

'Er det muligt at få trøjen i dag, hvis jeg henter den hos dig?' (Danish participant in Situation 7)

'Aftalen var kl 3 ik?' (Danish participant in Situation 11)

A curious observation, the Danish answers counted a total of 3 answers where the conditional clause did *not* serve as to tone down the impact of the reminding imposition but had the

intention to clarify to the hearer the consequence of non-compliance to the agreement. These conditionals thus *upgraded* the situational impact of the reminding:

'Jeg SKAL bruge min trøje i aften. Hvis ikke du kommer med den her, så bliver du nødt til at komme hjem til mig med den' (Danish participant in Situation 7)

The English and Danish native speaker groups differed slightly on their preference for particular syntactic devices respectively. Thus, with an average of 3.58 per situation, the English group preferably used the *past tense* as a politeness device, seen in 1.20 and 1.76 of the Danish and learner groups' answers respectively. With a frequency of 1.35 and 1.80 per DCT situation respectively, both the Danish and learner groups preferred the syntactic device of *questioning* was by far the most frequently observed device. Still, as a downgrading device, questioning was most frequently observed with the L1 English group (an average of 3.45 used per situation). When questioning assumptions rather than stating them, speakers avoid commitment and: '...questioning becomes a fundamental disarming device' (David-Nielsen 1990 cited in Trosborg, 1995:210). In my classification of questions as a downgrading device, it was important that they appeared as serious rather than rhetorical questions, which in my experience may have the opposite effect of rudeness. Moreover, I did not count at syntactic devices small-talk such as How do you do?/ What have you been up to? and the like, which do not genuinely asking for information (Hasselgård et. al, 2012:408). For this reason, several participant questions were not classified as downgrading devices. Thus, as a downgrading device the speaker gives the hearer a genuine choice to act or not:

'Excuse me but have you read my paper yet?' I'm leaving tomorrow' (Am. English participant in Situation 1)

'Have you seen my essay? Or didn't you have time?' (Learner participant in Situation 1)

Undskyld, men kunne jeg evt. få min opgave tilbage?' (Danish participant in Situation 1)

The tendency that both the Danish and the learner groups' production of less syntactic modification than the native English group was then observed even in those situations set to move towards more indirect expressions such as Situation 1. In addition to those given above, the following examples are all taken from Situation 1 and exemplify how the Am. English'

answers, in contrast to the other groups', commonly contained syntactic modification, frequently the *past tense*, in addition to other kinds of modification:

'Excuse me, could you let me know if you've had time to look at my paper yet? I'd like to work on while I'm away' (Am. English participant)

'Did you get a chance to correct that paper I gave you yesterday? I'm leaving tomorrow and I would really appreciate it if I could get it back before the end of the end of the day' (Am. English participant)

Compare:

'Har du min opg. med?' (Danish participant)

'It would be nice to correct my paper before leaving' (Learner participant)

5.4.2 Lexical/phrasal downgraders

The English, Danish and learner answers counted 4.30, 1.41 and 2.77 lexical/phrasal downgraders per reminding situation respectively. It should be stressed that the relatively high number of learners' lexical/phrasal modification is strongly connected to the fact that a few participants, to a sometimes excessive extent, used the politeness marker *please*:

'Please, can you still cover my shift tomorrow?' (Learner 2 in Situation 10)

'Please host father, can I stay out until 2?' (Learner 3 participant in Situation 11)

The particular participants' use of *please* much affected the whole learner group's average of 1.25 uses of *please* per request situation. This politeness marker was not frequently observed in the production of the L1 English group (an average of only 0.06) nor did I encounter *any* use of the equivalent *vær så venlig/ vær sød* among the L1 Danish group. With this, my findings both differ from and resemble Trosborg's on requests. That is, in her study Trosborg found that '...politeness markers were not obtained in the performances of NS-E and NS-D, and only in a few instances were observed in the learner data.' (ibid.:257). Finding the underrepresentation of *please* a bit surprising, Trosborg, however, suggests this might be due to the politeness marker's double function. By its very nature, *please* both emphasises the requestive force and as a mitigating device softens its impact (ibid.:258), and in my

experience, this equally applies to the Danish expression *vær så venlig/vær så sød*. This ambiguity might explain why *please/vær så venlig/vær så sød* was used by so few native speakers in my study. The following learner examples illustrate that the use of *please* might be problematic when the goal is to tone down the impact of the imposing reminding:

'Can I have my paper back, **please**?' (Situation 1)

'Could I **please** have my money back?' (Situation 12)

'Will you **please** bring me my shirt tonight. I have to use it...it is annoying that you don't bring it back.' (Situation 7)

'Will you **please** bring my shirt before tonight? I have to use it this weekend' (Situation 7)

In all of the above examples, *please* emphasises the reminding force, and in the latter two examples it seems as if, instead of serving as a politeness marker, *please* has the opposite effect, thus upgrading the force of the imposition.

Apart from the politeness marker *please*, participants agreed on other lexical/phrasal items, and in all groups I observed use of lexical/phrasal downgraders such as *consultative devices*, *hedging* and *understaters*:

'Kan vi ik' lige først få kigget på opgaven bare lidt?' (Danish participant in Situation 5)

'Is it still okay if I leave in 5 min?' (Learner participant in Situation 8)

'Can I get that shirt back tomorrow? It's that I sort of need it for this weekend' (Am. English in Situation 7)

'Hi, I'm just calling to see when I can pick up my phone?' (Am. English participant in Situation 9)

'Could you send my phone to my address? Would you mind?' (Am. English participant in Situation 9)

Overall, the L1 English group produced *significantly* more lexical/phrasal downgraders per reminding situation compared to both the Danish and the learner groups (see Table 17). With their use of speech act modifiers, the learners thus came a lot closer to L1 Danish than L1 English norms.

5.4.3 External modification

My participants generally used significantly more external than internal modification (see Table 18). With the imposing nature of reminders (see Section 2.4), I was not surprised to find that the L1 English group used a frequency of as many as 10.23 supportive moves per DCT situation. On the contrary, I was surprised to find that both Danish and learner groups used only approximately half as many (i.e. 4.90 and 5.80 moves respectively). The respective patterns of modification are representative, thus the numbers reflect the general behaviour observed in each group, although exceptions *were* seen.

Much more frequently than the Danish and learner groups, the L1 English speakers used the politeness devices *preparators*, *cost minimizers*, *disarmers* and *sweeteners* in addition to the *promise of an award*. These devices are commonly used with the intention to ‘persuade’ the hearer to complete with the desired action (Trosborg, 1995:215). In contrast to the Danish and the learners’ answers, L1 English answers moreover often contained more than one type of external modification Compare:

‘I’m sorry to bother you, but I really need my phone. If we could set up a time to meet whenever it’s convenient for you, I would really appreciate it’ (Am. English participant in Situation 9)

‘Excuse me, sir. I just saw that you were leaving and I just wanted to make sure that is alright for me to take Friday off?’ (Am. English participant in Situation 8)

‘Undskyld, men hvordan kan det være mit arbejdsskema ikke er rettet endnu?’ (Danish participant in Situation 3)

‘Excuse me boss...have you changed the schedule yet?’ (Learner participant in Situation 3)

In addition to Trosborg’s external modifiers, my findings propose an extension to the list. I thus observed means of modification, which are typical to the written mode only. Today, text messaging, i.e. SMS, and SMS language is extensively used among young people, and in my survey I found that some L1 Danish in addition to learner answers included a smiley face which is used to provide substitutes for facial expressions:

'What time should I be back tonight? I don't want to be late, and I'm not sure if you said 2 or 3?:-)' (Learner participant in Situation 11)

'Ku jeg få lidt af den der lasagne?' (smileyface) (Danish participant in Situation 6)

Since my participants were asked to answer in accordance with what they would say/do in actual face-to-face communication (see Appendix), this written symbol is taken to imitate their spoken language behaviour. Using a *smiley*, the speaker thus aims to tone down the imposition of the utterance, by, in Brown and Levinson terminology, appealing to the hearer's positive face, showing that they are friendly and positive towards the hearer. It is interesting that the symbol did not appear among the Am. English answers, which suggests a possible difference in register, i.e. formality, between the answers given by native English speakers on one side and native Danish speakers and learners on the other. The supposed difference in level of formality arguably draws parallels to some Danish and learner Situation 6 answers observed and commented in Section 5.3. I am referring to those 'comic' and very informal approaches with the intention to remind a stranger of some leftover pizza, examples of which include:

'Må jeg nappe en bajer?' (Danish participant)

'Hey dude fetch me a beer as well! Btw, should we call for some pizza?' (Learner participant)

5.4.4 Discussion and comparison with previous studies

Regardless of the social variables involved, the Danish group consistently produced brief and little modified answers, closely followed by the learners. By comparison, as a rule the native English speakers' answers were long and consistently modified, internally as well as externally. Representative answers from Situation 3 include:

'Sorry, I was wondering if the schedule has been changed and you didn't put it up? I talked to you about it and you said it was okay.' (Am. English participant)

'Oh hi (name). I just saw the schedule and I saw that I don't have next Saturday off. I wasn't sure if you forgot or something happened, but I would really appreciate it if I could have the day off like you promised.' (Am. English participant)

Compare:

'Hey chef, hva sker der med arb skemaet?' (Danish participant)

'Hi boss, did you change the schedule like you said you would?' (Learner participant)

Exceptions to the tendencies were seen, however. In Situation 9, not only L1 English but also many learner and Danish answers contained at least one and often more uses of speech act modification. That said, with average percentages of 85%, 67% and 70% respectively, the English participants still more frequently used at least some kind of either external or internal modifier than the Danish and learners groups respectively. I have already suggested (see previous section) that in Situation 9, the hearer of +D holds the speaker's object of desire (i.e. his phone) and for this reason speakers are naturally more attentive to preservation of the hearer's communicative face. Moreover, certain learner participants were consistent in answering with longer and/or more elaborated structures, which put them much closer to L2 target language than L1 Danish norms in terms of modification. Compare:

'Sorry, is it you who I talked to yesterday? Please let me know what to do now, and how I'll get my phone back? If it's okay, I can come to your address so just give it to me, and I'll come.' (Learner participant in Situation 9)

'Im sorry to bother you, but I really need my phone. If we could set up a time to meet whenever its convenient for you, I would really appreciate it.' (Am. English participant in Situation 9)

The findings that certain learners consistently acted in accordance with L2 target language rather than L1 norms proposes that, although analysed as a group, there *is* a great disparity in the L2 pragmatic competence of the 29 individual learners. In my particular survey, this observation may be connected to the learners' somewhat different educational experience prior to third-year A-level English teaching (see Section 4.5.1).

Notwithstanding the exceptions mentioned, it was a common tendency that in the 12 DCT situations combined, both the learners' and the Danish answers contained significantly less speech act modification than the native English speakers' answers.

My results are similar to Trosborg's to some extent, but there are also important differences. Trosborg writes that both the L1 Danish and L1 English groups produced significantly more syntactic modification per situation than any of the learner groups. In contrast to Trosborg's

findings, with 3.07 syntactic downgraders per situation, my Danish group produced overall fewer than the L1 English speakers, who had an average of 6.33. With a total of 3.50 syntactic downgraders per situation, the learners came closest to L1 Danish norms. Furthermore, while the native English speakers' answers often contained more than one downgrading device, the tendency was not frequently observed with the remaining groups. Moreover, in contrast to my findings (see Table 18), in her study, Trosborg found that native English speakers had a frequency of 2.096 and 1.085 syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders per request strategy, while native Danish speakers used 2.164 and 1.131 syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders respectively. Trosborg's Group II learners used 1.818 and 2.409 syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders respectively (Trosborg, 1995:246).

It is possible that the differences between Trosborg's and the present survey are connected to the different modes of research employed. Thus, in DCT my survey, I asked participants to answer according to their actual spoken language behaviour. Different from Trosborg's conversational analysis, however, the DCT *is* a written method only imitating conversational situations, and it gives participants the advantage to plan and to e.g. reread and reformulate their answers over and over, which is not possible in a conversational analysis. It is consequently possible that my participants used more internal modification than they would have done in actual real life situations.

In Trosborg's study, the Danish group produced overall less supportive statements than the NS English group, giving 6.458 and 9.125 supportive moves per request situation respectively. The learners, however, used notably less external modification than both of the native speaker groups (Trosborg, 1995: 267). In accordance with Trosborg's findings, with an average of 10.23, my native English speakers used *significantly* more external modification per situation than any of the other groups. The Danish and the learner groups' distributions were, however, very similar, thus 4.90 and 5.80 moves per situation respectively. Moreover, much more often than both my Danish and learner groups, the Am. English group used *more* than one type of external modification, resulting in overall longer responses:

'Hi, is it still ok if I stay out until 1 am? I just wanted to make sure you didn't change your mind and say thanks, I really appreciate it.' (Am. English participant in Situation

11)

Johansen found that Norwegians expressing gratitude were generally directed towards the hearer's negative face with the aim to restore 'the harmonious relationship', while native English speakers chose more strategies which appealed to the hearer's positive face (ibid.:129). On several occasions, Norwegians used longer expressions than the English group. In my study, native speakers of English produced an overall significant amount of both internal and external modification, most often appealing to the hearer's negative face, in situations with intimates as well as strangers and superiors:

'Can you give me a hand with my math real quickly? It won't take long' (Situation 5)

'I'm so sorry but I would have to remind you that you promised to cover my Saturday's shift? I hope it's still on.' (Situation 10)

'Oh, sorry to bother you but you forgot about the lasagne you suggested before? If you dont mind, I am very hungry' (Situation 6)

With this, the English speakers acted according to the imposing nature of reminders (see Section 2.4). In addition to negative politeness, my English speakers, however less frequently used expressions which appealed to the hearer's positive face in situations involving superiors, intimates or strangers:

'I really owe you a big one- first you invite me over for coffee and then you offer to cover tomorrow's shift. How can I repay you?' (Am. English in Situation 10)

'Why don't you stay for dinner...my mom makes the best rice...Then we can finish our math and watch TV afterwards' (Am. English in Situation 5)

'Hello, I'm calling about my phone. I'm free at....I really appreciate your kindness- I was so scared some lying thief would have picked up my phone. Thank G it was you!' (Am. English in Situation 9)

Native Danish speakers used overall few politeness devices, regardless of the hearer as e.g. 'a new teacher' or 'a friend'. My Danish group's answers were consequently overall shorter than those of their English counterparts.

According to Ellis, advanced learners have a tendency to verbosity (Ellis, 2008:190). Billmyer and Varghese (2000: 539) found that native English speakers produced shorter structures than NNS speakers of English, and Johansen (2008: 112) reports: ‘The responses in Norwegian and English by the Norwegian participants tended to be rather long and elaborate...’. Johansen found that not only did Norwegian participants answering in English produce long structures, they also generally produced longer structures than both the Norwegians answering in L1 and the L1 English participants. In my study, however, the opposite tendency was observed. It was thus a tendency that L1 English speakers used the most both internal and external speech act modification resulting in the longest responses.

In her conclusion, Trosborg writes that:

On the whole, learner requests were less well prepared, less well supported (less preparatory and supportive reasons)....Learners’ speech frequently lacked sweeteners and disarmers to support requests...learner requests were generally less attractive to the requestees than native speaker requests. (Trosborg, 1995: 306)

Although longer structures would not necessarily have made their speech acts more polite, the nature of the learner answers in the present survey could also be described with Trosborg’s quote above. They were *both* shorter and less modified than L1 English answers. Just like requests, learner reminders are in general less appealing and may consequently appear less polite than L1 English reminders.

5.4.5 Conclusion

In this section, I have argued that native Danish speakers’ structures of reminders generally differ from those of native English speakers, with shorter, less modified and more informal answers. This suggests a difference in politeness systems. I have previously suggested that Danish culture is very upfront and direct, which the present findings support. In my study, the learners almost consistently behaved according to L1 Danish rather than L2 English norms of speech act modification, except when it came to the use of *please*.

My findings overall agree with Trosborg’s on requests to the extent that the native English speakers produced more internal and external speech act modification than the learners, nevertheless differ with respect to the extent to which Danish speakers used more or less both internal and external modification than the English speakers in addition to the learners. In

contrast to Trosborg's findings, in my study, it was then the Danish group who used the least amount of speech act modification.

Above comparing my results to the previous findings of Ellis (2008), Billmyer and Varghese (2000) in addition to Johansen (2008), it should, however, be emphasised that 'advanced' level learners is not an established term, and while it is a fact that Johansen's participants were 'advanced' university level learners, also Ellis may refer to learners at a higher level of proficiency than that investigated in the present thesis (see Chapter 4). Either way, in apparent accordance with L1 pragmatic norms, my learners' utterances were shorter than those produced by native English speakers.

Based on my findings, in the following section I discuss the extent to which L2 learners' reminding strategies in addition to lack of speech act modification is likely to reflect L1 pragmatic transfer.

5.5 Transfer

In the previous sections, I have described how Danish learners perform reminders in L2 English and commented on their behaviour according to the social parametres investigated. Further, I have compared the learners' strategies and modificational patterns to those of native English and native Danish speakers. I have mentioned several indications of L1 transfer. In this section, I follow up by looking more closely at these indications of transfer and comparing them with what was found in Trosborg's (1995) and Johansen's (2008) studies.

5.5.1 My findings: indications of transfer

Throughout the 12 DCT situations, participants preferred *indirect* rather than *direct* reminding strategies, and more specifically strategies of conventional indirectness. This observation supports my prediction (see Section 2.4) that by nature, reminders is considered inherently imposing on the hearer. What is more, even though there were not clear patterns in the answers when it came to the social variables, the English and Danish groups tended to vary in a similar way. That is, it was the same situations that tended to elicit more opt-outs, direct or indirect reminders than usual from both groups. It therefore looks like the social parametres worked in a similar way in the two groups. Although they performed in a similar way in this respect, various aspects of the performance of the English speakers on one side and the Danish speakers on the other suggest some underlying differences in sociocultural norms.

Overall, Danish speakers produced more opt-outs than English speakers, which was most significant in Situations 2, 4, 5, 11 and 12. The very indirect strategy of hinting was also more frequently observed with Danish than English speakers. Both native speaker groups preferring strategies of conventional indirectness, only among the Danish answers did I observe conventionalised use of ‘past tense modals’. What is more, the conventional indirect strategy of expressing needs/wishes or desires was overall observed in twice as many L1 English compared to L1 Danish answers. As to the direct strategies, no significant differences in performance were observed.

Interesting is the differences observed in the groups’ distribution of situational modification respectively. Thus, a pronounced tendency, the English speakers produced twice –or approximately twice- as much both syntactic and lexical/phrasal modification than the Danish speakers. Although both native speaker groups produced significantly more external than internal modification, the English speakers used about twice as much as the Danish’. In effect, the English speakers produced the longest and less explicit responses. The observations made did not pertain only to the overall results, but also held for each situation.

The native Danish speakers in the study opted out of the performance of a required reminding much more frequently than the native English speakers. According to politeness theory, rational speakers will always seek to avoid face- threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1999: 326), and by opting out of performance, the speaker avoids offending the hearer at all, but at the same time fails with the initial communicative purpose. My findings therefore indicate that much more often than native English speakers, native Danish speakers seek to *avoid* performance of the ‘uncomfortable’ act. However, the Danish group also produced *more* direct reminders than the Am. English group and additionally used significantly *less* modification.

I have thus observed that, on the one hand, native Danish speakers are much more reluctant to perform on-record than the English speakers. When actually performing the reminders, however, the Danish speakers are often a lot less attentive to both the hearer’s negative *and* positive communicative face, in contrast to the English native speakers. This might support a view of Danish culture as generally more ‘direct’ and rather informal. Situations involving e.g. ‘a friend’s new neighbour’ (i.e. Situation 6) need not require more modification than situations involving friends (e.g. Situation 2). My findings thus point to underlying differences in the English and Danish politeness systems.

Discussing the learner group's overall performances in Section 5.1, it was clear their reminders strategies patterned with the Danish rather than the English group. As such, my findings suggested that learners acted almost strictly in accordance with L1 pragmatic norms. None the less, since overall results can sometimes hide differences- for example that learners might behave completely differently from the Danish group in particular situations - I decided to include also the discussion of the individual situations (Section 5.3). Even there, it was, however, clear that the learners generally patterned with the Danish group. Using overall very similar strategies, in addition to the use of these strategies in similar situations indicate transfer. That said the learners *did* produce more direct reminders than any of the native speaker groups. Although I have concluded that the difference between learners' and Danish direct reminding strategies of 29% and 22% respectively is arguably not significant (see Section 5.2), it is still possible that this finding counts against transfer. Since the English speakers produced almost as many direct strategies as the Danish group (21%), the learners' direct performances could, however, not be explained from adaption to L2 norms.

As indicated by their use of strategies, with their use of reminders modification, learners clearly patterned with the Danish group. Just like the Danish group, learners used approximately half as many syntactic, lexical/phrasal and external modifiers as the English speakers. In effect, learner answers were, similar to the Danish responses, generally shorter than L1 English reminders. My findings indicate that in L1 Danish, these short and little modified responses are commonly acceptable ways of reminders, which moreover agrees with my observation that Danish culture is by nature direct and up-front. In L2 English, the learners, however, lacked sufficient politeness devices, which were otherwise observed in the L1 English answers. The learners' behaviour clearly counts for transfer.

5.5.2 Comparing my findings to previous related studies

The learners in my study produced fewer reminders than the native English speakers, just like the learners in Trosborg's study produced fewer requests. That said, in her study Trosborg found that native Danish speakers produced the second highest number of requests altogether. In contrast to Trosborg's findings, I found that Danish speakers produced *fewer* reminders than any other group. Investigating learner patterns of the strongly related speech acts requests and reminders (see Section 2.4), I have already suggested (see Section 5.4) how these different findings are possibly connected to different methodological approaches of

conversational analysis and DCT respectively. The different findings may, however, also suggest that native Danish speakers rank the mentioned speech acts differently.

In Section 2.2, I predicted that for present purpose, the distinction between learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence was usefully maintained. According to my findings, indications of pragmalinguistic transfer are seen in the learners' strategies. Not observed in the L1 English answers, learner responses included use of these past tense modals which was similar to L1 Danish reminders:

'**Could** I please not have the money from yesterday back?' (Situation 12)

'**Couldn't** you help me with my homework first?' (Situation 5)

'But you **should** help me with my essay!' (Situation 5)

'Hej... **kunne** vi **lige** mødes senere...' (Danish in Situation 9)

'**Kunne** vi få noget af lasagnen der?' (Danish in Situation 6)

In all of these examples, the modal verb serves to refer to a previous engagement instead of simply being a downgrading device. According to Trosborg, the Danish language is rich in particles such as '*lige*' and '*ikke*', which function to emphasise the speaker's attitude and expressions (Trosborg, 1995: 249-51). Among both the Danish and the learner groups' answers, I observed past tense modals with and without negation. The particle '*lige*' was, however, frequently used in the Danish answers only, thus learners did not use the English equivalent '*just*' in any inadequate way.

This use of modals described was not observed among the Am. English group's answers. Although perfectly acceptable in Danish, this way of reminding is not conventionalised in English. When produced in L2 English, therefore, this use may result in rather rude reminders, and possibly even upgrade the situational impact. This use of past tense modals can therefore be described as negative pragmalinguistic transfer.

In her survey of advanced Norwegian learners' expressions of gratitude, Johansen observed only few signs of syntactic or lexical problems, and consequently writes that there were only limited signs of pragmalinguistic transfer in their responses (Johansen, 2008:125). In my survey, I have investigated learner strategies of a different speech act and used participants at a somewhat different level of proficiency than Johansen (2008) (see Section 3.6). Such factors might explain why our findings differ with respect to indications pragmalinguistic transfer.

Thus, I have previously argued that there are varying degrees of even ‘advanced learners’. It is consequently possible that my results would have been different and more similar to Johansen’s had I investigated learners at the beginning of a university education, where I expect that their overall L2 pragmatic competence has improved since upper secondary school e.g. through longer stays in English speaking countries. Thus in contrast to Johansen’s findings, in my survey none of the learners had yet been abroad living in an English speaking country for 6 months or more (see Section 4.4.2).

Investigating the communicative act of requesting, Trosborg (1995) found only limited signs of transfer. Evaluating their modificational patterns, Trosborg writes that learners produced notably fewer downgraders than both Danish and English native speakers respectively (Trosborg, 1995:246). Finding that L1 Danish speakers produced *more* requests (ibid.: 223) in addition to more downgraders per strategy than any of the other groups, native English speakers included (ibid.:246), Trosborg suggests that pragmatic difficulties rather than transfer seems to prevail the learners’ performances. As a possible source of L1 transfer, however, Trosborg reports that the Danish group’s use of external modification was significantly lower than that of the English one: ‘The shortcomings in learners can, therefore, to some extent be ascribed to pragmatic interference from the mother tongue’ (ibid.: 266).

Also in my study did learners’ responses contain notably less modification than the L1 English speakers’. In contrast to the learners, my Am. English group produced overall both longer and more elaborated structures attempting to preserve the hearer’s communicative face. Therefore, my learners’ answers generally suggest insufficient knowledge of L2 English politeness routines performing reminders. Although sporadically observed, the learners used only half as much both internal and external modification as the English group. What is more, in learner responses, the politeness marker ‘*please*’ was sometimes excessively hence inadequately used. Therefore, the learners’ answers do not convincingly indicate that they had the L2 pragmatic competence needed for reminding in English. This finding is arguably a bit surprising. That is, in addition to their reported level of proficiency inside a classroom setting, Danish learners are also excessively exposed to English outside one. According to their answers, 86 % (25) of the learners confirmed they see or hear English on an everyday basis, most of which takes place through internet use (i.e. 89% (26) and/or the reading of books or magazines (55% (16) (see Section 4.4.2).

As such, my findings suggest that this mainly passive, even if daily, exposure to English does not necessarily impact on their pragmatic competence in English.

Combined with the observation that Danish speakers in addition to learners opted out of performance more often than English native speakers, my observations of modificational patterns agree with Trosborg's comment that the display of emotions is not a part of Danish culture (Trosborg, 1995: 44). This, however, contrasts with Johansen's findings that native Norwegian speakers in addition to L2 learners of English gave overall longer and less explicit expressions of gratitude, sometimes displaying *more* emotions. Since Johansen and I used similar methodological approaches (see Section 3.6), explanations of these different observations are possibly found in the difference in speech acts investigated. Both finding that learners behave according to L1 sociopragmatic norms, the particularities of our studies respectively thus differ pronouncedly.

Similar to the learners in Trosborg (1995:306), my learners thus produced speech acts which, due to their lack of sufficient modification, were overall less well supported and consequently less appealing to the hearer than those produced by L1 English speakers. In contrast to Trosborg's findings, however, I found that when producing reminders, also in L1 Danish, the target participants lacked sufficient supportive moves. My learners' modificational patterns therefore strongly suggest negative L1 transfer.

In several DCT situations, Johansen (2008) found indications of possible negative sociopragmatic transfer. Just like in the present study, Johansen (2008) investigated participants' sensibility to the social variables *power*, *distance*, *imposition* and *rights and obligations* and let the learners respond to L2 English as well as L1 Norwegian situations (see Section 4.4.2). In those of her situations where the risk of negative transfer was highest, Johansen observed that participants viewed the social factors differently, and therefore writes that these are culturally relative (Johansen, 2008:117). Thus, in several of her situations such as Situation 4, 'Raise' marked *+power*, *+distance*, *+imposition* and *-rights and obligation*, which required that the speaker thanks their boss for a raise in pay, Johansen's English speakers generally preferred strategies of explicit thanking (ibid.: 115). The Norwegian learners, however, in L1 Norwegian as well as L2 English, answered with longer and more emotional structures (Johansen, 2008:81). Johansen thus found that in L2 English as well as L1 Norwegian, learners *did* demonstrate overall sensibility to the variables, but that these were somewhat different from the L1 English participants' preferences (Johansen, 2008:128).

Johansen's finding disagrees with the indication of Brown and Levinson that the degree of politeness increases with the speaker's power over the hearer (ibid.:83).

In her study, Trosborg's learners *did* show some adjustment to the parameters *dominance* and *distance*. In contrast to her English group, however, the upper secondary school (i.e. Group II) learners presented hearer-oriented requests of willingness/ability to strangers rather than authority figures and 'suggestory formulaes' to authority figures rather than to strangers. The learners' way of differentiating was not in agreement with the preference observed with native Danish speakers either, and could thus not be ascribed to mother tongue influence : 'the deviations found in learners compared with NS-E performance cannot be ascribed to mother tongue influence but must be seen as a lack of awareness of target language norms' (Trosborg, 1995:279).

In my study, participants generally agreed on the extent to which the social variables investigated required either indirect or direct performance of reminders. It thus seems as if the social parameters worked in a similar way in my three groups.

5.5.3 Conclusion

The similarities in strategies chosen in all the situations in addition to the conventionalised use of past tense modals and resemblance of modificational patterns all indicate that possibly even advanced Danish learners of English transfer into L2 English what is acceptable according to Danish cultural norms. Transferring what seems to be conventionalised and acceptable in Danish into L2 English; even advanced learners' grammatically acceptable reminders might thus have the unfortunate outcome of making the learner seem impolite and of resulting in misunderstandings. Although my results differ from Trosborg's in the particularities, I would therefore agree with her that 'In general it can be concluded that requestive [and reminding] behaviour in learners is far from optimal' (Trosborg, 1995: 306).

Although they are 'advanced' learners, my findings indicate the Danish learners appear to have some problems adapting to the L2 sociocultural rules of English when performing reminders moreover that they transfer Danish communicative norms into L2 English reminders.

6. Conclusion

I have previously argued that with the goal to achieve successful communication with native speakers of a language, learners should adapt not only to the L2 language's grammar, but possess also sufficient knowledge of its contextual use. Reading studies such as Trosborg (1995) on 'Request strategies in non-native and native speakers of English' strengthened my own experience that discourse competence may still be a somewhat neglected area in second language classroom teaching. In this thesis, I therefore aimed to look at Danish learners' pragmatic competence in L2 English and chose to investigate their communicative treatment of a particular speech act. Reading Johansen's (2008) 'A comparative study of gratitude expressions in Norwegian and English from an interlanguage pragmatic and second language acquisition research perspective' additionally inspired me to look at the extent to which mother tongue pragmatic norms might still impact on even advanced learners' L2 strategies.

As a student I have become acquainted with several second language studies on speech acts such as requests, apologies and complaints. In my thesis, I aimed to shed light on the necessity for further investigation of more marginal and marginally studied illocutionary acts.

Particularly interested in those speech acts, which are not necessarily 'comfortable' for the speaker to produce and the hearer to receive, thus acts which are inherently imposing, I decided to focus on the speech act reminders. A further advantage, reminders is closely related to requests, which would facilitate comparison of my eventual results to those of Trosborg (1995) in addition to allow me to adapt the basics of her model for survey analysis (see Section 4.6).

With these aims, I decided to focus on a group of Danish upper secondary school A-level English learners since: a) I predicted they had not yet been abroad living in an English speaking country (as opposed to e.g. University level learners), thus would not yet have been excessively exposed to L2 in a L1 community thereby adopting cultural norms b) they attend the highest level of L2 teaching in the Danish public school system.

With the aim to find if, when deviating from target language norms, learners' reminders might result from mother tongue influence, I decided to ask the learners to respond to reminders partly in English and partly in Danish (see Section 4.4.2). This method was strongly inspired by Johansen (2008). Since I wished to observe and report on learners'

communicative behaviour, it was necessary I moreover included a group of L1 English speakers, against whose answers the learners' would be compared and contrasted. Greatly exposed to this variety since Danish youth is (see Chapter 3), for ease of reference, I decided on a group of American English 'senior high school' pupils.

With my decision to use the discourse completion task method, I was particularly impressed by its controllability, easily structured and controllable overview in addition to grouping of answers (see Section 4.1). At the same time, I was aware of the method's potential restrictions (see Section 4.2). Reflecting on my eventual findings, within this thesis' limited scope, the DCT *did* arguably serve its purpose and facilitated my analysis of answers, and it helped me revealed both interesting and clear indications of speakers' communicative patterns.

Using the DCT method in addition to a modified version of Trosborg's model for analysis, I was thus able to collect and compare my data in an easily controlled way, which eventually led to my findings that not only do learners' productions of reminders somewhat differ from those of native English speakers, these differences moreover indicate transfer of L1 sociocultural norms.

In several ways, my findings suggest that strongly related though they are, reminders are emphatically *not* requests. Thus, although keeping the basics from Trosborg's model for analysis of requests, my findings required I included also additional categories (opt-out) and subcategories (conventionally indirect as well as direct ones). This suggests that speakers treat reminders and requests as separate speech acts, and consequently that speakers' request treatment, commonly observed and reported in previous research, might differ from their treatment of reminders.

In my survey I found that native speakers of English and Danish overall agreed on the level of directness of performance required by the total 12 DCT situations' internal structures of variables respectively, indicating similar patterns of sensibility. My results, however, also show that when producing reminders, native speakers of English and Danish differed in their overall distribution of opt-outs, particularities of conventionally indirect sub-categories in addition to modificational patterns. This suggests differences in underlying politeness systems respectively.

I have previously emphasised how Johansen and Trosborgs' study findings respectively disagree on the extent to which transfer was an important explanation for learners' L2

performances (see Section 3.6). My findings indicate that when producing reminders, to some extent, even advanced Danish learners rely on L1 rather than L2 communicative norms and transfer L1 politeness routines into L2 English. Thus, agreeing with what appears to be Danish cultural norms, in addition to more opt-outs than the English speakers and the use of conventionalised ‘past tense modals’ not observed among L1 English answers, my learners’ reminders lacked sufficient modifiers, which resulted in much shorter, notably fewer and much less appealing requests than those produced by the native English speakers.

All in all, my findings suggest that when performing reminders in L2 English, Danish learners do not conform entirely to target language norms of polite speech act realisation i.e. demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the amount of face work required to realise reminders. Thus even advanced Danish English learners may not (yet) have acquired sufficient pragmatic competence to perform L2 reminders similar to L1 English speakers. As such, my findings agree with both Johansen and Trosborgs’ studies.

I agree with Ellis (2008:833) that with the aim to improve learners’ pragmatic knowledge, more contextually focused classroom activities may be useful.

This study gives only limited support to existence of a possibly far-reaching phenomenon in second language teaching. With my findings presented, I nevertheless wish to suggest for a raised awareness to learning in different contextual settings and an increased use of different social constellations not naturally found inside a classroom setting. Activities such as role-plays in which also ‘uncomfortable situations’ (and speech acts such as reminders) are tried out may thus have a positive impact on learners’ L2 pragmatic competence and better endow them for communication with native English speakers.

6.1 Study Limitations

Since I predicted that the total of 16 possible situational (i.e. parametrical) combinations of *power*, *distance*, *imposition* and *rights and obligation* would have required too much time and effort on behalf of the pupils participating, thus possibly result in less satisfying results, in my DCT survey, I decided to include only 12. I nevertheless predict that a full survey including all 16 possible combinations might have impacted on my findings, possibly supporting the indications already described.

In some DCT situations, participant answers might reflect a basic disagreement with my situational ranking respectively. Thus, in e.g. Situations 8 and 10, contrary to my expectations, a great part of participants used direct reminders, while I observed the reversed tendency in e.g. Situation 11. Since all situations had been tested on a pilot group (see Section 4.4.1), these findings were much surprising. A direct consequence, I would have to rethink some formulations and choice of e.g. hearer constellations in the situations concerned.

A further study limitation concerns my target participants' actual completion of the DCT. Thus suggesting that learners transfer L1 modificational patterns into L2 answers, I can, however, not ignore the possibility that these patterns of answering reflect a genuine lack of interest in survey completion rather than these learners' actual knowledge of L2 politeness routines. Since I asked the Danish participants to perform the task on very similar conditions to the American English participants and personally observed the Danish participants complete the DCT (see Chapter 4.4.2), with no signs of irregularities, I have no further grounds to speculate on this matter. It nevertheless remains a possible source of error.

As previously indicated (see Section 4.4), in this study, I should have liked to include more participants. The present numbers of 29 and 21 target and control informants respectively thus constitute only a limited ground on which to look for general tendencies.

Finally, it would have been optimal to compare and contrast the present findings to a study investigating L2 learners' pragmatic competence of the same speech act i.e. reminders. Not familiar with the existence of such a study (see Section 2.4), it is, nevertheless, my opinion that a very relevant substitute was found in Trosborg's (1995) study on Danish learners' productions of requests.

Appendix 1

The DCT versions 1 and 2 distributed to every other of the 29 participating Danish upper secondary school pupils respectively (see Section 4.4.2).

Spørgeskema 1

Spørgeskemaet består af to dele.

DEL 1:

I den følgende, første del vil jeg bede dig svare på nogle korte spørgsmål angående dit personlige forhold til det engelske sprog.

Sæt kryds ved/ring rundt om rigtigt alternativ:

1. Er du: Mand ☐ Kvinde ☐

2. Har du opholdt dig i et engelsktalende land i længere tid (over 6. mdr. eller mere i træk)

Ja ☐ Nej ☐

3. Er dansk dit modersmål?

Ja ☐ Nej ☐

Hvis ikke, hvad er så?

4. Har du lært andre fremmedsprog FØR engelsk?

Ja ☐ Nej ☐

5. Behersker du andre fremmedsprog end engelsk?

Ja ☐ Nej ☐

Hvis ja, hvilke(t):

5. Hvor ofte ser/hører du engelsk udenfor skolen? (Såsom via internet, TV/film, reklamer, opslag på offentlige steder osv.)

Dagligt: _____
Flere gange om ugen: _____
Ugentligt: _____
Sjældnere: _____

6. Hvor ofte snakker/skriver du engelsk udenfor skolen?

Dagligt: _____
Flere gange om ugen: _____
Ugentligt: _____
Sjældnere: _____

6. Hvorfra får du hovedsagligt dine engelsk-input udenfor skolen?

(Sæt gerne flere kryds)

1) Internettet	_____	
2) TV/film	_____	_____
3) Bøger/blade	_____	
4) Reklamer/opslag på offentlige steder	_____	
5) Butikker/offentlige institutioner	_____	
6) Andre (specificer)	_____	

DEL 2:

Instruktioner:

Det følgende spørgeskema (eller såkaldte "discourse completion task") er helt anonymt, og enhver deltagelse er naturligvis helt frivillig.

Jeg vil bede dig besvare de følgende spørgsmål så ærligt som muligt i forhold til hvordan DU selv ville agere i de enkelte situationer. Det er således også et fuldt ud gyldigt svar hvis du lader et svarfelt forblive blankt hvis du i en eller flere af de beskrevne situationer ikke ville have sagt noget.

Jeg beder dig om IKKE at tage hensyn til potentielle stave - eller grammatikfejl, som jeg ikke vil se efter.

Der er med andre ord ikke noget, der i denne undersøgelse vil blive set på som et "rigtigt" eller "forkert" svar.

På forhånd mange tak for din deltagelse og hjælp.

Please answer the following questions in ENGLISH.

1.

You have just begun attending a language course in the USA, and are having class with your new teacher to whom you have recently submitted a paper. Yesterday, the teacher agreed to correct your paper first and give it back to you already today since you will be away for the rest of the week. However, when class is over, the teacher has not mentioned your paper, and he/she is about to leave the room when you say:

2.

You spend an exchange year in the USA where you work at a nice café. It is Thursday, you are at work, and your boss is present. Last week she promised to change this week's work schedule for the upcoming weekend to give you Saturday off to go to your friend's surprise party. Nevertheless, the schedule still has not been changed. When your boss is about to leave, you say:

3.

You are in the USA, and at home with a good friend from your language course. The two of you are chatting, relaxing and listening to music although the actual purpose of him/her visiting was that he/she help you with your essay due the next day. After a while, your friend makes a comment that he/she had better leave soon, as it is almost dinner time.

You say:

4.

You spend a year in the USA, working in a café. Your American friend and co-worker borrowed a shirt from you two weeks ago. This weekend you are planning to wear the shirt to a party, for which reason you had asked her to bring it back to you by yesterday. However, she did not. Today, you are at work together again, and when you see her, you say:

5.

You are travelling with friends around the USA. One night, you come home to your hotel only to discover that your phone is missing. You must have lost it sometime during the day. You try to call it and luckily, someone answers. Relieved, you talk to the finder, who seems nice. Impatient to get back your phone, you ask her if you can come pick it up on the next day. The finder agrees and gives you her phone number. She says she will get back to you the next morning with a time to meet up. Nevertheless, by the next evening there has been no news from the finder. You choose to dial her number, make the call and say:

6.

You are in the USA where you attend a language course and stay with a host family. The parents are really nice, and they make you feel welcome and part of the family. Today, it is

Friday and you are planning to go out with a group of friends from your language course. Usually, the host family allows you to stay out until 2 am at the latest. Last night, however, the father agreed to extend that limit until 3 am, just for tonight. Before heading out, you want to make sure this agreement is still on.

You say:

Svar venligst følgende spørgsmål på dansk.

1.

Du har fået en gruppe gode venner gennem engelsk på højniveau, og I sidder på en bar og hygger jer. Desværre glemte en ven/veninde sin pung derhjemme, og han/hun spørger om han/hun kan låne 70 kroner af dig til en drink. I det samme kommer du i tanke om, at denne ven/veninde allerede skylder dig penge for to frokoster i kantinen i sidste uge samt for 3 kopper kaffe. Du har ikke noget imod at låne ham/hende penge men er samtidig interesseret i at vedkommende er klar over han/hun allerede skylder dig penge.

Du siger:

2.

Det er lørdag aften og du er til fest hos en, du ikke kender særlig godt og har indledt en samtale med en, du ikke før har talt med. Det viser sig at vedkommende deler din store interesse for fotokunst, og I taler meget sammen om dette resten af aftenen. Din nye bekendte kommer i tanker om at han/hun faktisk har en ekstra billet til åbningen af den kommende weekends store fotoudstilling, og disse billetter har været nærmest umulige at få fat på. Han/hun tilbyder dig billetten, og du takker begejstret ja. I aftaler at ringes ved, og du giver ham/hende dit nummer.

Den følgende fredag har du intet hørt, og du er utålmodig og er ved at opgive håbet om udstillingen da du pludselig løber ind i ham/hende på gaden.

Du siger:

3.

Du er til housewarming hos en vens nye nabo. Ingen af jer kender denne nabo særlig godt, men synes det er hyggeligt til festen. Du er ret sulten, og bemærker diskret dette til din ven. Naboen overhører tilfældigvis din bemærkning, og siger at han har noget lasagne tilbage fra aftensmaden, som han gerne vil varme til dig. Du takker ja. På trods af sit tilbud sætter naboen sig til rette i sofaen med en øl. Han bliver siddende til han efter næsten en halv time rejser sig for at hente flere øl. På dette tidspunkt er du blevet rigtig sulten. Da han går forbi dig, siger du:

4.

Du er til time med en ny lærer på gymnasiet. I går bad du læreren om lov til at gå 15 minutter før timen slutter i dag da du gerne vil nå en bus som kun går en gang i timen. Dette fik du indvilget. Der er kun 20 minutter tilbage af timen da læreren begynder at inddele jer i par til arbejde med en tekst. Da læreren kommer forbi dit bord og skal til at give dig teksten, siger du:

5.

Du er blevet gode venner med din jævnaldrende overordnede på arbejdet. For nogle dage siden sad I hos hende/ham og drak kaffe. Hun/han tilbød da at tage din vagt på fredag hvor du gerne vil med på en tur til Tivoli. I dag er det torsdag, dagen før turen. Du håber at din ven/overordnede stadig husker jeres aftale. Da du ser hende/ham på arbejdet, siger du:

6.

Du er på ferie med din onkel og tante i deres sommerhus. Du og din onkel er gået i supermarkedet, og han skal til at betale da han opdager at han har glemt sin pung derhjemme. Selvom du ikke har mange penge for tiden, låner du ham selvfølgelig pengene som er

omkring 200 kroner. Din onkel lover at betale dig dem tilbage samme dag. Næste aften har han imidlertid hverken givet dig pengene eller kommenteret sagen. Du begynder at tænke på, om han mon har glemt det.

Du siger til ham:

Hvis du er kommet hertil vil jeg benytte lejligheden til igen at takke dig mange gange for din hjælp og deltagelse i denne undersøgelse.

Spørgeskema 2

Spørgeskemaet består af to dele.

DEL 1:

I den følgende, første del vil jeg bede dig svare på nogle korte spørgsmål angående dit personlige forhold til det engelske sprog.

Sæt kryds ved/ring rundt om rigtigt alternativ:

1. Er du: Mand ☐ Kvinde ☐

2. Har du opholdt dig i et engelsktalende land i længere tid (over 6. mdr. eller mere i træk)

Ja ☐ Nej ☐

3. Er dansk dit modersmål?

Ja ☐

Nej ☐

Hvis ikke, hvad er så?

4. Har du lært andre fremmedsprog FØR engelsk?

Ja ☐

Nej ☐

5. Behersker du andre fremmedsprog end engelsk?

Ja ☐

Nej ☐

Hvis ja, hvilke(t):

5. Hvor ofte ser/hører du engelsk udenfor skolen? (Såsom via internet, TV/film, reklamer, opslag på offentlige steder osv.)

Dagligt: _____

Flere gange om ugen: _____

Ugentligt: _____

Sjældnere: _____

6. Hvor ofte snakker/skriver du engelsk udenfor skolen?

Dagligt: _____

Flere gange om ugen: _____

Ugentligt: _____

Sjældnere: _____

6. Hvorfra får du hovedsagligt dine engelsk-input udenfor skolen?

(Sæt gerne flere kryds)

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1) Internettet | _____ | |
| 2) TV/film | _____ | _____ |
| 3) Bøger/blade | _____ | |
| 4) Reklamer/opslag på offentlige steder | _____ | |
| 5) Butikker/offentlige institutioner | _____ | |
| 6) Andre (specificer) | _____ | |

DEL 2:

Instruktioner:

Det følgende spørgeskema (eller såkaldte "discourse completion task") er helt anonymt, og enhver deltagelse er naturligvis helt frivillig.

Jeg vil bede dig besvare de følgende spørgsmål så ærligt som muligt i forhold til hvordan DU selv ville agere i de enkelte situationer. Det er således også et fuldt ud gyldigt svar hvis du lader et svarfelt forblive blankt hvis du i en eller flere af de beskrevne situationer ikke ville have sagt noget.

Jeg beder dig om IKKE at tage hensyn til potentielle stave - eller grammatikfejl, som jeg ikke vil se efter.

Der er med andre ord ikke noget, der i denne undersøgelse vil blive set på som et "rigtigt" eller "forkert" svar.

På forhånd mange tak for din deltagelse og hjælp.

Please answer the following questions in ENGLISH.

1.

You are in the USA attending a language course. You have made some friends, with whom you are currently in a café, enjoying yourself. Unfortunately, a good friend forgot to bring his/her wallet, and asks if you could lend him/her 8 dollars (approximately 45 DKK) for a drink. By then, you remember he/she already owes you for two of last week's school lunches in addition to 3 coffees. You do not mind lending him/her money, but at the same time you would like him/her to be aware he/she already owes you.

You say:

2.

You are in the USA, attending a language course. It is Saturday, and you are at the party of someone you do not know very well. You are talking to a nice stranger. In the midst of the conversation, the two of you discover you share a great interest in photography. Your new acquaintance suddenly remembers he/she has a spare ticket for next weekend's long sold-out photo exhibition, and wants to know if you would be interested. You are very excited and cannot believe your luck since you yourself have been trying to get a ticket. Thankfully, you accept the offer, and give him/her your phone number, and he/she promises to call you soon. By Friday, you are getting really impatient having had no call from the party acquaintance. You are about to give up hope to go to the exhibition when you suddenly run into him/her in the street.

You say:

3.

You are in the USA and at the house of an American friend's new neighbour. The neighbour is giving a housewarming party, and has invited the two of you although none of you know him from before. At the party, you get hungry and make a discreet comment to your friend about this. Nevertheless, the neighbour overhears your comment and says he has some lasagne left over that he will gladly get you. You thank him. In spite of his offer, the neighbour chooses to sit down in the sofa with a beer. He remains there while almost half an hour goes by. By then, you are really hungry. Suddenly, the neighbour gets up from the couch and walks pasts you to get more beer from the fridge. When he passes by you, you say:

4.

You are in the USA where you have just begun attending a language course. Yesterday, you asked the new teacher if you could leave 15 minutes early today to catch a bus that only runs every hour. He/she agreed. Today in class, there is only 20 minutes left when the teacher

suddenly decides to divide you into pairs for a text discussion. It seems he/she does not remember your agreement. When he/she passes by your table to give you the text, you say:

5.

You spend a year as an exchange student in the USA, where you also work in a shop. Your superior, who is around your age, has already become a good friend. A couple of days ago, the two of you were having coffee at her/his place. Here, she/he agreed to cover your Friday's shift for you to participate in an excursion. Today, it is Thursday, the day before the excursion. You want to make sure she/he has not forgotten your agreement. When you see her/him you say:

6.

You are attending a language course in the USA and are staying with a nice host family, and by now, you feel very comfortable with them. Yesterday, you and the father were in the local supermarket. Unfortunately, the father forgot to bring his wallet, so you lend him 40 dollars (approximately 200 DKK), which he said he would pay you back once you get home. By the next evening, he has nevertheless still not done so, and you begin to worry he might have forgotten about the money.

You say to him:

Svar venligst følgende spørgsmål på dansk.

1.

Du er netop begyndt på engelsk højniveau på gymnasiet, er i skole og har time med den nye lærer, du for nylig indleverede en opgave til. I går indvilligede læreren i at rette din opgave først og give dig den tilbage allerede i dag, da du rejser på en uges ferie fra i morgen. Da timen er slut, har læreren dog ikke henvendt sig til dig med opgaven, og skal til at gå ud af lokalet da du siger:

2.

Det er torsdag, du er på dit arbejde, og din chef er til stede. Sidste uge lovede hun dig at ændre denne uges arbejdsskema sådan at du kan få lørdag fri for at kunne deltage i din bedste vens surprise party. Arbejdsskemaet er imidlertid ikke blevet ændret. Da din chef gør sig klar til at tage hjem, siger du:

3.

Du og en ven sidder hjemme hos dig og slapper af, snakker og hører musik. Det var dog meningen, at hun/han skulle hjælpe dig med den matematikopgave, du skal aflevere næste dag. Efter noget tid siger din ven at hun/han må se at komme hjem da det snart er tid til aftensmad.

Du siger:

4.

En ven, du har mødt igennem arbejdet, lånte en trøje af dig for to uger siden. Du havde tænkt dig at have trøjen på til den kommende lørdags fest, så du bad hende/ham om at give dig den tilbage senest i går. Dette skete dog ikke. I dag er i begge på arbejde samtidig og da du ser hende/ham, siger du:

5.

Du har været i byen med nogle venner. Da du kommer hjem, opdager du din mobil er væk. Heldigvis er der en, der svarer da du ringer til den, og personen i den anden ende af røret virker venlig. Du er ret utålmodig for at få mobilen tilbage, så du spørger finderens om du kan komme og hente den allerede næste dag. Dette er helt fint med hende, som giver dig sit eget mobilnummer. Hun siger hun vender tilbage i løbet af næste formiddag for at I kan aftale et tidspunkt at mødes. Næste aften har finderens imidlertid ikke givet lyd fra sig. Du taster hendes mobilnummer, ringer op og siger:

6.

Du er under 18 år og på campingferie med din onkel og tante. I dag er det fredag, og du har mødt nogle andre unge på campingpladsen som du har lyst til at tage i byen med om aftenen. Normalt får du lov til at være ude til klokken 2 men din onkel har denne aften givet dig lov til at blive ude til klokken 3. Du vil gerne sikre dig at han husker jeres aftale. Lige før du går ud, siger du:

Hvis du er kommet hertil vil jeg benytte lejligheden til igen at takke dig mange gange for din hjælp og deltagelse i denne undersøgelse.

Appendix 2

DCT questionnaire distributed to the 21 Am. English participating upper secondary school pupils (see Section 4.4.2)

Questionnaire:

The completion of the following questionnaire is voluntary, and will naturally be 100% anonymous.

When answering the questions, I ask you to be as honest as possible in terms of how YOU would react in the situations described. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers, and it is perfectly fine to leave a blank if you would not have said anything in one or more of the situations described.

Thank you for your participation and help with my study!

1.

You are at school during class of a new subject with a new teacher to whom you have recently submitted a paper. Yesterday, the teacher agreed to correct your paper first and give it back to you already today since you will be away for the rest of the week. However, when class is over, the teacher has not mentioned your paper, and he/she is about to leave the room when you say:

2.

You and a group of friends are in a café enjoying yourselves. Unfortunately, a good friend forgot to bring his/her wallet, and asks if you could lend him/her 8 dollars for a drink. By then, you remember he/she already owes you for two of last week's school lunches in addition to three coffees. You do not mind lending him/her money, but at the same time you would like him/her to be aware he/she already owes you.

You say:

3.

It is Thursday, you are at work, and your boss is present. Last week she promised to change this week's work schedule for the upcoming weekend to give you Saturday off to go to your friend's surprise party. Nevertheless, the schedule still has not been changed. When your boss is about to leave, you say:

4.

It is Saturday, and you are at the party of someone you do not know very well. You are talking to a nice stranger. In the midst of the conversation, the two of you discover you share a great interest in photography. Your new acquaintance suddenly remembers that he has a spare ticket for next weekend's long sold-out photo exhibition, and wants to know if you would be interested. You are very excited and cannot believe your luck since you yourself have been trying to get a ticket. Thankfully, you accept the offer, and give him your phone number, and he says he will call you soon. By Friday, you are getting really impatient having had no call from the party acquaintance. You are about to give up hope to go to the exhibition when you suddenly run into him in the street.

You say:

5.

You and your friend are at your place chatting, relaxing and listening to music although the actual purpose of her/him visiting was that she/he help you with your mathematics assignment due the next day. After a while, your friend makes a comment that she/he had better leave soon as it is almost dinner time.

You say:

6.

You are at the house of a friend's new neighbour. The neighbour is giving a housewarming party, and has invited the two of you although none of you know him from before. At the party, you get hungry, and make a discreet comment about this to your friend. Nevertheless, the neighbour overhears you comment and says he has some lasagne left over that he will gladly get you. You thank him. In spite of this offer, the neighbour chooses to sit down in the sofa with a beer. He remains there while almost half an hour goes by. By then, you are really hungry. Suddenly, the neighbour gets up from the couch and walks past you to get more beer from the fridge. When he passes by, you say:

7.

Your friend, whom you met through work, borrowed a shirt from you two weeks ago. This weekend you are planning to wear the shirt at a party, for which reason you had asked her to bring it back to you by yesterday. However, she did not. Today, you are at work together again, and when you see her, you say:

8.

Yesterday in a new class, you asked your new teacher if you could leave 15 minutes early today to catch a bus that only runs every hour. He/she agreed. Today in class, there is only 20 minutes left when the teacher suddenly decides to divide the class into pairs to discuss a text. It seems he/she does not remember your agreement. When he/she passes by your table to hand you the text, you say:

9.

You have been out with a group of friends, and come home to discover you lost your phone. You try to call it and, luckily, someone answers. Relieved, you talk to the finder, who seems nice. Impatient to get back your phone, you ask her if you can come pick it up the next day. The finder agrees and gives you her address and phone number. She says she will get back to you the next morning with a time to meet up. Nevertheless, by the next evening there has been no news from the finder. You choose to dial her number, make the call and say:

10.

At work, your superior, who is around your age, has already become a good friend. A couple of days ago, the two of you were having coffee at his/her place. Here, he/she agreed to cover your Friday's shift for you to participate in an excursion. Today, it is Thursday, the day before the excursion. You want to make sure he/she has not forgotten your agreement. When you see him/her, you say:

11.

You are spending a couple of weeks during summer camping with your aunt and uncle. Today, it is Friday and you want to go out with some friends you met at the camping site. Usually, your aunt and uncle allow you to stay out until midnight at the latest. Last night, however, your uncle gave you permission to stay out until 1 am, this time only. Before heading out, you want to make sure this agreement is still on.

You say to him:

12.

You are visiting your aunt and uncle who live in another state. You and your uncle are grocery-shopping in the local supermarket when your uncle realizes he forgot his wallet at home. Although short of money, you naturally lend him the 40 dollars for the food. Your uncle says he will pay you back once you get home. By the next evening, he nevertheless still has not paid you back, and you begin to worry he might have forgotten about it.

You say to him:

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

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